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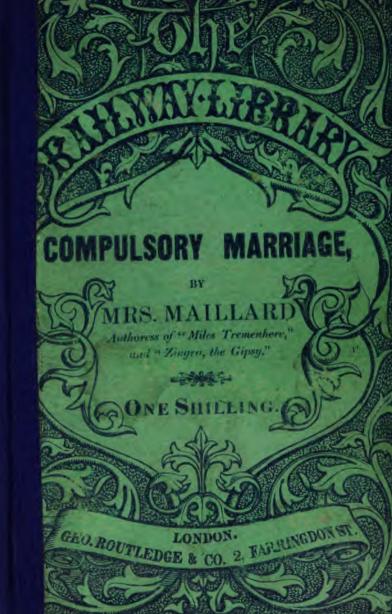
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AUTHORESS OF

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COMPULSORY MARRIAGE.

CHAPTER L

THERE is nothing gayer than a fête in France; naturally endowed with the love of pleasure, the whole people appear to throw off business and care for the time being, and put on the

wedding garments of festivity and enjoyment.

A bright September day, redolent of perfumes, fruit, flowers, and all the riches of nature with which the air seems laden in the provinces towards the South, shone forth, and Tours was all gala and merriment:—bands of music here, shows there, crowds of pretty, neatly-dressed peasant girls and grisettes were running through the streets, and, amidst the various groups, the soldiery were scattered, adding colour and light to the scene.

The bridge leading into the town, on the high road to Paris, (we write of a day before the railway had driven away the heavy diligence,) was crowded by the rejoicing numbers looking eagerly at sports enacted on the water; and pushing their way amongst the mass, were the sellers of lemonade and cocoa, those peripatetic conveyances peculiar to the Continent, with their little tinkling

bell, and heavy cans on their shoulders.

But all pleasures pall at last on the weary appetite; and, as evening drew near, the crowds densely filled every possible receptacle dedicated to refreshment; the streets thinned, the sun set, and "uprose the yellow moon;" and, as she rose, the windows of the Mairie sparkled, by degrees, with many lights to do honour

to a ball therein.

Amidst the illuminations at the Mairie, you saw many heads crowding at the windows, displaying waving plumes, flowers fresh and scented. Here a young, fresh face smiled, there a more matronly one looked youthful again with pleasure's gleam upon it; and in gay uniforms the heroes of sabre and moustache paid willing homage to all. Above the din from the bridge rose the monotonous roll of every conveyance, from the light fly to the

lumbering carriage of country build, as it drew up to leave its load

at the Mairie.

An assembled and curious multitude at the door watched with delight and eager gratification the various parties as they arrived in their respective vehicles. A merry group of young men stood together, well placed for seeing, and unhesitatingly made their observations on all, encouraged by the applauding laughter of their hearers, which goaded them on, almost beyond prudence occasionally, in their remarks.

"Oh!" cried one, laughing, as a little dark man hurried into the doorway on foot, "there's my neighbour going up stairs; and

they call this a select ball!"

"Why shouldn't he be there?" asked a voice.

"Tiens! such a question! he's a chiropodist or a hair-dresser, I don't know which—I know he's a Jew!"

"That's no reason why he shouldn't go to the Mairie," was the

reply.

"My dear fellow, his being a Jew is my greatest consolation; for he lives over my head, and when I'm studying I hear those creaking boots of his walking about like Caius Marius among the ruins of Carthage, crunching the bricks and mortar."

"How can his religion remedy that annoyance, Monsieur?"

asked a bystander, curiously.

"Why you see, ami, Jews are always making bargains, and so will he some day. And we are told, on the most ancient authority, that in sealing a contract they always take off their shoes, and give them to the contractor. Fate send him a little affaire de ommerce soon!"

"Ah! Mademoiselle Deprès!" exclaimed another, as a lady of a certain age stepped from a carriage; "still vouée à la Vierge, all in white. She should change her name to Deloin. Lovers fight

shy, and marriage is a very distant perspective."

"There are no more lotteries in France," rejoined a voice;

"marriage is one."

"Pardonnez-moi, ami, 'tis a game of hazard; fate shakes her dice-box, throwing doublets all sizes. Time holds the stakes, which are won either by a deep hatband, or a close widow's cap."

As every carriage deposited its load, there arose a fresh cry of exultation or merriment; in some cases a sergent de ville endeavoured to repress the exuberance of spirit and speech by words of authority, but it generally terminated in his being laughed down by the crowd, as he turned half sulkily away. And the group of young men drew gradually nearer and nearer to the door.

"Tiens!" exclaimed one of them, as two gentlemen entered, "Monsieur Silvandy without his wife! Who can that be with him? What a fine, handsome man! he looks like an ecclésias-

tique."

"Oh, 'answered another, "possibly Silvandy has brought him here to-night to exorcise Madame, and drive her evil spirit out on a rocket. What a blessing it would be for Silvandy. She is a soupe maigre to him—he grows thin à vue d'ail."

"She is a Lenten dish of lentils," laughed the first, "brown and unsavoury."

And Silvandy passed on with his tall, handsome friend.

"Our young fellows here have unlicensed tongues, Monsieur l'Abbé," said the former, wincing under the observations he had been forced to listen to, in the press at the door.

"Such an evening breaks down all restraint," was the quiet rejoinder. "Coming from my recent travels in almost uncivilized places, this scene appears strange and not uninteresting;" and they passed on.

"Sur mon ame," exclaimed a young man. "There are two beauties! Do you know them? What are their names? Strangers

they must be English, perhaps?"

"No," was the rejoinder, "they are speaking French."
And from a carriage had descended two girls of most winning beauty, accompanied by a man of middle age, tall and commanding, and a younger one, evidently, from the likeness, brother of the young ladies. There was not a word uttered, save in praise of them as they passed on and mounted the stair. And with them we will ascend, leaving the group at the door to watch the fresh arrivals. Entering the salons, a murmured inquiry met them at every step. "Do you know them?" "Where do they come from?" and a dozen others. Almost unconscious of the wonder and admiration around them, the two beautiful girls crossed the rooms already crowded, leaning on their father and brother, for in such relationship stood the two gentlemen accompanying them, and approached an open window to see the display of fireworks on the river.

"How beautifully the moon has risen to-night, Henri!" said the fairer of the two girls, as she leaned on her brother's arm. "And how coquettish, too; one moment sailing aloft in all her majesty, and then again gliding behind a cloud like a playful child at bo-peep, lingering too, and half inclined to go to rest,

weary with enjoyment.'

"The moon would have but little taste," he replied, "to dream of sleep with such a gay scene to look down upon. See how she enjoys it too: look at her beams dancing in liquid rays amongst the harlequin crowd."

"I will leave Paula with you for a short time," said their father, rejoining them with the other fair girl of the party, "I wish to

look for some one."

So saying, with the unmistakable care of deep affection, he placed Paula beside the other two; and the three children of the Baron de Rouvray stood together for some time at the window uninterruptedly watching the fireworks and multitudes beneath, with the happy gaiety of those seldom present at such scenes of excitement and pleasure.

The two elder children remained together, making their observations on all they beheld, but Paula had sunk on a chair, still amused at the scene without, but evidently more interested in the preparations for dancing within the salons. A tall, singularly

handsome man stood at a distance alone; he too was making his mental observations on all around withinterest and visible curiosity. as if inspired by an unaccustomed scene. Several times his eye had fallen on the group at the window. Is there not a kind of freemasonry telling us of those, who, like ourselves, are not the ordinary habitants of the scene or place where we meet them? They seemed isolated, like himself, amidst the throng. There was something severe in his costume too, which, when he entered with Monsieur Silvandy, had made the young men at the door call him ecclésiastique. Silvandy confirmed this in giving him his title of "Abbé." Paula, the youngest girl, had just turned her gaze once more without, as a brilliant bouquet of fireworks threw its light on many a face, when suddenly a voice, soft, low, and impressive fell on her ear, saving,

Mademoiselle seems interested: this is certainly a very ani-

mated and diversified scene."

She looked up. "Yes," she replied, smiling with the gentle blush of timidity, "I never saw such a one before, living as I do in the country."

"Then you don't term this the country?" and he smiled.

"Oh no, Tours is very gay; there is much society and many

balls, but we never have visited any before."

He evidently seemed interested in the innocent and fair girl before him, for her shyness was that of a child, not that painful thing, mauvaise honte; he leaned against the abutment of the window, and looked down upon her, while her brother and sister merely turned when they heard her speak, and then continued

their observations on the scene outside.

"I should call this country," said Paula's cavalier. "When we have visited cities and wilds-cities, where all that is gorgeous gleams around to dazzle you; wilds, where the immensity of nature bids you bow down in humility, conscious of your own littlenesssuch a scene as this, though curious, such a town as this, though lively, appear as the busy nest of ants into which we peep with interest from its very activity; yet still it seems only a small hole in the earth in the comparison.

Her eye shrank beneath the intense, yet tempered fire of his glance. "You speak," she replied, timidly, "like one who has seen much. Those who live secluded can only wonder and imagine."
"Yes, much," was the reply, "much to please and remember

with joy, much to look back upon with regret." He paused a moment, then added, in a lower tone, with his eyes fixed upon hers inquiringly, "Was Mademoiselle at the cathedral this morning?"

"No," answered she, "we never go there; we are not Ca-

tholics.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed, and his brow clouded over as with a momentary regret, which as suddenly gave place to an expression not easily definable; then seating himself on a vacant chair beside her, he added. "I thought I had seen you there; it was, however, much crowded, and if I had really seen you, I must, I think, have

known you again.'

These words seemed to fall involuntarily from him, as from one accustomed to much solitude, which engenders a habit of speaking one's thoughts aloud: there was nothing of gallantry in it to

offend the most scrupulous listener.

He continued for some time longer in earnest vet quiet conversation, and as her first timidity wore off, she felt how great was the charm of such a mind over any she had ever before met with: it fascinated her spirit. A bustle around them announced that the fireworks had terminated, and Terpsichore was sending around her mandates for homage to be paid to her. The mayor came bustling up to the windows, summoning all; and accompanied by an ungainly looking youth, whom he presented as his son, requested Paula's hand in one of the then forming quadrilles.

Seeing them advance, her unknown acquaintance had risen, and

turned partially aside. The mayor bowed lowly to him.

"I wonder who he is?" thought she, but this momentary feeling of interest was checked by the mayor's salutation and presentation

of his presumptive heir.

"Hah! Mademoiselle de Rouvray!" he exclaimed, as the elder girl turned round, "I did not perceive that it was your brother beside you. Allow me to seek you a more suitable partner.'

"I prefer dancing with him this dance, Monsieur Lavilleroy,"

she replied, smiling. "It is an old engagement."
"Ah, well," answered the mayor, "we have all heard of Mademoiselle's attachment to her twin brother; but we must

separate you next dance."

It was not merely from affection that this arrangement had been made, but to avoid a little natural embarrassment incidental to a debût in a first ball. Paula had, with the candour and à plomb of an innocent, though spoiled child, declared, "She would rather have a stranger to dance with: a brother was so very stupid. so Henriette might have him."

As she moved away, leaning on her cavalier's arm, she raised her eyes to the stranger with whom she had been conversing, and bowed. As he replied to it, there was a look of regret on his fine It exhibited more than a momentary annoyance at her departure; it seemed the sorrow of an exalted mind for the frivolities of life! And yet what, to an ordinary man, was there so reprehensible in a dance on a fête night at the Mairie?"

But this was not an ordinary man, neither did he look one. as he stood towering above all in stature, watching the merry

dancers.

"Well, Monsieur l'Abbé," exclaimed Silvandy, rejoining him. "This is gayer than Africa or China, is it not?"

"Yes, but not so elevating, or refining to our nature!"

"The world must be amused," was the rejoinder, as they moved away.

And the young and gay danced; some were glad, many unsatisfied. All called it delightful; and if Aurora, who looked in upon them before they separated, could have dived into every heart, she might have said to many an aching one and weary head,

"Better had rested before Dian paled, and have risen with me to dip your rosy lips and fingers in the dew of a thousand buds."

But, as Monsieur Silvandy said, "The world must be amused." And the early dew might by some be pronounced "a cold bath of

rheumatism: the doctor's friend."

Château des Ormes, the seat of the Baron de Rouvray, was situated on the high road from Tours to Blois. Although a building of noble structure, there was a gloomy grandeur about it, little in harmony with our English ideas of comfort. It stood out cold and white amidst the rich and abundant woods surrounding it. The rooks cawed in the high trees, the growth of ages, but they did not bring to the mind that idea of internal comfort, with which we welcome their voices, as associated with the existence of human habitations.

Nature and art had done all they could for the grounds; but stiff in their beauty, they resembled the high-born dame in courtly robes, not the lovely gentlewoman at perfect ease. You felt almost as if the flowers were painted, unreal things, from the formality of the beds in which they were planted: and stepping into the large salon opening on a stone balcony, whose steps led down to the gardens, a chill came over you, so ungenial was the

general aspect of the place.

The Baron de Rouvray, now in his fiftieth year, had, twenty years before this story commences, married an English lady of birth equal to his own, and, like himself, a strict Protestant. He, in accordance with most of that persuasion in France, bore a close resemblance in religious clanship to the Protestants of Ireland, holding but a distant intercourse in society with the Catholic families of the neighbourhood. There was, however, one exception, the curé of the village, who was a privileged guest at all times at the château.

The sun had set on a lovely September evening, a week after the ball at Tours, and twilight was creeping on—still the figures

in that room were distinctly seen.

It was a large gloomy apartment, the floors so polished that the foot slid upon them in walking; the furniture had not one innovation of modern fashion—old arm-chairs of yellowish damask, with their eider-down cushions, large ottomans with many pillows, and comfortless hard chairs, whilst on the floor innumerable Lilliputian carpets were spread before each seat. Two large windows opened on the heavy stone balcony without, green in many places from age and damp. A large chimney alone gave cheerfulness to the room, and, soft and warm as the evening was, a fire of logs blazed there.

Near that fire sat a lady, over whose head some forty-five winters—all winter—had passed, judging by the fixed sadness of her air. There was despondency in every lineament and movement; yet beauty still lingered there, cold and pale, but unmistakable; the small features, bloodless as a statue's, the light hair, closely braided on the forehead, the clear, melancholy blue eye, perfectly English, but so sad, it almost made one sigh to look in it. Uncertain in its glance, it met yours and fell. This lady was

the Baroness de Rouvray.

Beside her sate a tall, rigid figure, clad in black, only relieved by a white neckcloth. It needed no tongue to announce his calling. This was Mr. Bruton, a Protestant clergyman, English by birth, educated abroad, and speaking more fluently the French language than his mother tongue; to him was entrusted the care of the Protestant church in Tours. A bachelor of forty, cold, austere, doing everything as if it were a duty, not a pleasure; but sincere in all he did. Nature must have been chilled by some cutting east wind on the day of his birth, and nature alone was to blame—the man was sincere. He was a frequent guest at the château, where he found constant employment for his devout exercises in administering the comforts of religion to a soul in continual pain—the lady of that gloomy salon.

They sat apart from the rest in that room, conversing in a low

tone.

There was another group near one of the open windows. A tall, pale, handsome man, of some fifty years of age. His dark eagle eye had lost none of its youthful fire; his hair, though thin, was scarcely tinged with grey. Nobility sat on every feature; but severe, exacting pride, cold and unbending, reigned above all; he sat almost as fixed as a statue, in a large arm-chair before that window.

At times a gentler look crept for an instant over his features, as he bent his downward gaze on a lovely face which looked up in almost childish love to his; at his feet, on a low stool, sat a girl, whose lithe, graceful figure was bent back, as her head rested on his knee, her hands clasped together, and supporting her against it. One arm of his was round her waist, the other hung over the arm of the chair, at times rising with the hand which caressed the soft braids of dark hair bound round her beautiful head, en Vierge.

This was Paula, his youngest child. Beautiful as she was, the most attractive object in that group, in force, in expression, in every charm to win the attention, was the curé of the little village

church, Père Andriot.

He was as tall as the baron, yet bent, as with care or study, not age. He might be junior to his host by some year or two, yet it little mattered what number had stamped their marks of patient suffering on his cheek and brow. The silvered hair added a charm to the nuld, Christian lustre of his fine blue eye; the mouth, which never opened save to smile, or speak in comfort or peace, disclosing teeth still of even form and pure colour; the cheek, generally pale, lit up almost like a girl's when the heart spoke its emotions; guileless as an infant, patient and long-suffering, he walked on earth a worthy minister of heaven. None more truly cheerful than he; not mirthful, for the merry laugh never broke the sad harmony of his features; but cheerful and

placid, he brought peace as a garment about him, whether he entered the chamber of death, or looked on the young and lighthearted, who danced on the village green to the music of a cracked flute or violin, and never more joyous or free than when le bon cure looked on with his approving, calm smile.

He was leaning now against the open casement, looking over

the grounds.

"I marvel." he exclaimed, after a silence, "that Mademoiselle

and her brother have not returned; it grows late.'

"Late and chilly," responded the baron; "pray ring, Monsieur. and bid the servant close the windows, and throw some more logs on the fire."

The curé moved to obey—he was there as one of the family. "Not yet, papa," said Paula, looking up in her father's face.

"It is so soft and warm, and this light is so tranquil."

The curé stopped; her will was law with all—the influence of love—for every one loved Paula.

"You will catch cold, my child," said the baron; "these

autumnal evenings are treacherous."

"No, no," she answered, almost petulantly, "I love the air and twilight, and those cawing rooks; all is so peaceful," and she laid her beautiful head on her arm like a child.

"Enfant!" said her father, tenderly.

The curé returned to the window; he seemed uneasy; then stepping forth, leaned over the balcony.

A low toned conversation from the two at the fireside alone broke the stillness for some moments, if we except the noisy cawing

of the rooks returning to their homes.

Presently a joyous voice was heard without—a man's, and then another in gentler tones, to which the curé cheerfully responded over the balcony. There was a spring up the stone steps, then a lighter bound, and Henri and Henriette, whom we have already met with at the ball entered by the other window with Père Andriot.

Paula disengaged her father's arm, and rose quickly to meet

 $_{
m them.}$

"Truants!" she cried. "is this your half-hour's sail? two long hours," and she pointed to the clock on the mantelpiece, "have I been watching your return."

"Then why not have come with us?" exclaimed Henri; "we

asked you."

"Yes, but I don't like the water,-I'm afraid."

"Knowing that, Henri," said the baron, "you might have re-

linquished your sail to-night, to please the child."

"Paula is too much spoiled already," answered Henri, "she would be ruined if I were not to oppose her sometimes; wouldn't you, Pauline?" as he passed his arm affectionately round his sister's waist.

From early manhood, the Baron de Rouvray had remained little at home during the lifetime of his father, a widower, on the old estate: he disliked the place, and preferred to travel.

father died, and two years afterwards the traveller returned, bringing with him his fair, sad, English wife, and a twin bond of union: Henri and Henriette, about a year old. Six months afterwards, Paula was added to his family, and there nature

paused, well pleased with the loveliness she had created.

Henri and his sister were in their nineteenth year, and were as much alike as two of the opposite sex can be. Both had the mother's fairness, with light glossy, golden hair, in waving abundance. The eyes were of a peculiar shade—that light hazel, almost matching the hair, with a bronzed brightness in them; the mouth, which scarcely closed, so short was the upper lip, showed the white, glistening teeth between their rich redness. There was the mother's classical nose, and the high, noble forehead, which bore legibly upon it the qualities of the heart. They were both tall, she even more so than he, in comparison; and in those two bosoms beat one heart in every pulsation. There was even more than the usual tie, so mysteriously linking twins, and that strange chain of nature's forging, seemed endowed with double strength in each, to give power to their love for little Paula; and yet she was but eighteen months their junior.

She, too, was of a good stature, not so tall as her sister, but of middle height; and graceful as ever was gazelle—to nothing else could she be compared. The small, exquisitely turned head, with its raven bands; the large, lustrous dark eyes, with their darker lashes, which rested on the round, blooming cheek; the small laughing childish mouth and delicate nose, whose nostril dilated with every emotion—such was little Paula. Though petulant, hers was as the waywardness of a child, not the caprice of ill-temper. Spoilt by all, petted by all, guarded, like some idol, by its worshippers, she rose above indulgence superior to many of the faults which such love might have engendered.

But, where Henriette was all womanly strength, Paula was all

weakness, and could never successfully withstand the rough weather of the world; the artificial warmth in which she had been

nurtured had too much enervated her.

It had been at her earnest request that the invitation to the ball at the Mairie was accepted, where we first beheld them; for the Baron's family lived in extraordinary seclusion. They rarely visited any one, and out of some necessary meetings had become acquainted with, and been led into a sort of civility towards, the mayor and his wife. Paula pleaded so much to go, that her ever indulgent father consented. Nothing, however, would induce the Baroness to accompany them. And now that great enjoyment had passed away, scarcely leaving a trace—or none indeed—save on Paula, who found her thoughts sometimes straying towards her tall, intelligent, unknown acquaintance near the window.

CHAPTER II.

THAT large, gloomy salon looked somewhat gaver when the light from the lamp and log cheered it, and the various persons were less scattered about. At the table in the centre sat the two girls and Henri, playing that most simple, but thoroughly French game, loto, with Pere Andriot. He was truly the father of the youthful and gay in palace or in cot; the young sought his benign smile to countenance their pleasures.

The baron, his wife, and Monsieur Bruton were conversing near he fire.

A joyous laugh from Paula proclaimed her for the third time a

winner.

"Mademoiselle," said the curé, with his quiet smile, "beware of marriage; you are too fortunate in games of chance. You know what the old dames sav."

"Paula must not marry till we find her a fairy lover on the

green turf by moonlight," answered Henri.

"I will look for him, my children," replied Père Andriot, rising.

"on my way home; it grows late, I must leave you."
"Not yet, mon père," cried the three players in one breath, rising

to detain him; "one more game-just one."

The servant entered with the supper tray. "Now you must remain," cried Henriette, taking his hand; "just for this once sup with us.

"My child," and he clasped her soft hand, "you know my simple evening meal awaits me at home. I never take more than my cup of milk and crust, and then, if I prolong my stay, my sister will be alarmed; à demain," and he cordially shook her hand.

"I do not press you, Monsieur Andriot," said the baron, advancing: "here you are free, as at home: we make no stranger of

"Thank you, Monsieur le Baron, I well know that, and therefore the great pleasure I feel in your house, and the society of these dear children," so he designated the group beside him.

"Apropos of children," continued the baron, "where is your nephew, and when do you expect him? He will have outgrown

all our memories."

"Not mine, papa," cried Paula. "I shall always remember our play-fellow Edgar.

And I, and I," chimed the other two. The curé smiled on them in gratitude, and then turning to their father, answered.-

"We had letters from Edgar a fortnight since, where he has been distinguishing himself much," and his face lighted up with honest pride. "To think of my nephew, the poor curé's nephew, having been décoré on the field of battle by Son Altesse, who complimented him highly. And now he is on his way home on leave, after an absence of four years. He will have grown a fine man, a fine man I am sure, like his father, my poor brother; and I trust and pray."

and the voice sank from its exalted tone to one of deep humility, a good and righteous one!"

"I wish I were there with him," exclaimed Henri, impetuously,

"instead of passing a life of idleness at home."

Henriette grasped his hand-she saw their father's look.

"And when will Edgar be here?" asked Paula.

"Soon, my child, I trust," answered the curé.

"Then be sure you bring him here directly, the moment he arrives," she said.

Her voice for a moment dispelled the cloud on her father's brow. The curé promised all she could wish, and taking a quiet leave.

Now. Henri." said his father. "seat yourself, and listen to all

I have to say."

Henriette looked entreatingly towards her brother, as he sat

doggedly down.

For some strange, and to them most unaccountable reason, the twins had ever been forced to acknowledge an evident reserve in their father's manner to them, amounting in many instances almost to ill concealed aversion. On Henriette's gentle spirit this was a source of deep grief; but she was submissive in the hope of extinguishing it; on her brother the effect was totally different: he saw it too clearly, and his rebellious spirit proudly resented the injustice; for however they strove to meet their father's wishes, they were only tolerated, never loved; and his love for Paula, who seemed a privileged being in all things, was as intense and confiding as his dislike to the others. Still, this strange partiality failed to make them even momentarily jealous of her power and influence.

"I have had some serious conversation," continued his parent, after a pause, "with Monsieur Bruton respecting you, and I grieve to find how much you neglect your duties with him. Three days. and you have not ridden over to Tours, as I imagined you had

done; where were you?"

"Engaged, sir," answered Henri, laconically.

Bruton shook his head in condemnation; his mother sighed, her only sign of attention, for her eyes were fixed on the embers, in

"Engaged!" cried his father, angrily, "and how dare you seek any other engagement than what directs you to Monsieur

Bruton ?"

"Sir," answered Henri, rising, "I have more than once heard you condemn parents for forcing the inclinations of their children. and yet you urge mine towards a channel they never will pursue. I read with Monsieur Bruton to please you and my mother, who wished me to do so; but boy as you look upon me to be. I have my own ideas-crude, they may be-of religion. I am unfit to be a clergyman; I have no inclination for the vocation; more, I never can conscientiously be one-and I wont."

But his sisters grasped his arm in supplication; they dreaded

these too frequent scenes with his father.

"When," said the baron, calmly, "I spoke against forced inclinations, I alluded to marriage, and——"
"The church," interrupted Henri, "would be a forced marriage

tie to me; I would sooner die than enter it; it is fit for—"
"Henri," whispered Henriette, "you forget Monsieur Bruton." "No, I do not," he continued aloud; "I mean no disrespect to our clergyman in my observations. The church is fitted for those who prefer a life of inactivity; I would be a soldier, like

Edgar Andriot.

That you cannot be," answered his father; "you, English by your mother's side, could not, in the event of war, fight against her country: an idle life leads to mischief; besides, you must seek some career: you have refused the bar-there is no alternative."

"The church," ejaculated Monsieur Bruton, slowly, deeming it time to interfere, "is a holy calling, full of tranquil joys, and to a

meditative mind gives employment to every hour."

"True, sir," answered Henri, more calmly, "to those who choose

it; but it must be a choice. I dislike and renounce it."

"And I," said his father, his anger at length breaking forth, "command you to enter into it, or you have nothing to expect from me. Wilful I have ever found you; now I deem it a sacred duty

to indulge you no more."

"Indulge!" cried Henri, disrespectfully. "Had you ever loved or treated me as a son, I might now subdue my own dislikes to gratify you; but you hate, have ever hated me-why, I know not —and Henriette too, and the last cannot be for her rebellious spirit, for she is an angel." And he cast his arms round "his sister," as he always called her in contradistinction to Paula, who was "Little Paula." Henriette disengaged herself, and grasped " as he always called her in contradistinction to Paula, who her father's arm.

"Pardon Henri, my father," she cried with earnestness, "he is excited—knows not what he says. Pray, oh pray pardon him!"
Paula flew to the other side. Henri had too much reason for

what he had said about Henriette. The baron's angry glance fell on Paula's face, and softened—on her sister he never looked—she too felt it, and shrank back on her brother's arm. Madame de Rouvray joined her hands, in mute agony: she looked on her husband, but did not speak—these were scenes of frequent recurrence.

"Henri," said Bruton, in his cold, measured phrase, which was ill calculated to soothe, "duty to your parents is your first, after obedience to heaven. You are committing a grievous sin, moreover; 'tis not for you to judge what is best for you. Your father

has chosen, you should obey!"

The other vouchsafed no reply, but drawing up his fine manly figure to its full height, after gently placing Henriette on a seat,

he strode out of the room.

When he was gone, the baron burst into a torrent of invectives, which were not a little increased by Bruton's severity of judgment -poor Paula sat and wept. Madame de Rouvray only wrung her cold, pale hands, and looked the prayer she did not utter—the woman was worn almost to the grave by some secret sorrow. Henriette laid her hand gently on Bruton's arm.

"Pray, oh pray, Monsieur," she whispered, "do not irritate my

father against poor Henri."

The baron was striding to and fro in rage.

"Poor Henri!" continued she; "no one seems to love him, or seek to curb his spirit, except myself, and Père Andriot, and his words fall like manna in the desert, around all. Well may they say of him that he is 'bon comme le bon pain.'" and she quoted that popular and poetical description of a good man.

"Monsieur Andriot," replied Bruton, coldly, "comes here too much; I feel convinced he incites your brother to rebel—there is hypocrisy in his very smile."

Henriette fell back and gazed in amazement at him.
"Pere Andriot," she cried, "he a hypocrite! he encourage Henri! Ah, you little know him! Had he remained this evening -he, a minister of peace-Henri would never have said all he did."

Unintentionally she had vented a bitter sarcasm against Bruton. It was true, his cold, systematic manner, irritated Henri's proud spirit: a soft, kind word from one he looked up to, as he did to the cure, would in an instant have soothed and brought him to reason.

Much more was said. In vain Henriette pleaded for her brother: it was not till Paula added her entreaties, that the baron consented conditionally, on pardon being asked, and a promise to pursue his studies given, to forgive him next day.

When the next day came, the flashing eye grew calmer, under Henriette's soothing, and the stubborn lip unbent, to express something like regret and a promise of amendment, and a promise

to study under Bruton, for the church.
"Henriette," he cried, impetuously, "were Bruton like our bon cure, I would do anything for him; but such men as Bruton. cold. calculating, and systematically following given rules, disgust one with the church!"

"Hush, Henri, you must not speak, still less think thus; all priests are not like notre bon cure, nor all ministers cold as Bruton. Come, Henri, to our father, and then we will go with Paula to the village, and see Père Andriot and his sister, and learn

when Edgar is expected."

"I am glad, however," he said, doggedly, "that I told my father what I have long felt, his want of love for us-you, too, have seen it." She cast down her eyes, but spoke not. She would not censure her father to his son. "I see you have," continued he, "and why is it? I may be rebellious, he has made me so; but you, you never spoke to him but as a daughter in your life, yet he turns from you, and all his love is for Paula. I don't blame her; I love her dearly, the dear child; but though his hatred of us is no fault of hers, whence or why that hatred?"

Henriette took his arm, and tried to smile. "To my father,

and beg an humble pardon: you are cross, Henri—and then for our walk;" and she led that proud spirit to her father's feet, though in forced if not feigned humility.

CHAPTER III.

The previous evening of beauty had been succeeded by a morning the brightest that nature ever rejoiced in at that season of the year. Autumn! it must be spring, spring with all its hopes, its happy future of anticipation. The birds are warbling their freshest notes, and the dew lies on the young grass, which a bright warm sun is refreshing its lip with, as it stoops to kiss the verdure—it must be spring! But no, see on the ground dead and senseless to that soft warm day, lie the leaves once so green; you turn with a sigh from the evidence of decay, and almost weep for the inanimate things which have died before they felt its beauty!

After the pardon, coldly accorded, and ungraciously received, the three, brother and sisters, started for the village, distant scarcely half a mile. They had two other companions, Reefer, Henri's Newfoundland, which bounded madly and delightedly along, and Manette, an old faithful servant who had resided with

Madame de Rouvray, prior to her marriage.

Some five-and-twenty years before this tale commences, Madame de Rouvray's father had been a détenu at Verdun. Manette had lost both her parents, and being an orphan, and in poverty, had been taken by the young English girl, who was some five years her junior, as her attendant. Thus the usual relation of servant to a superior, became as a tie of mother to daughter. Madame de Rouvray had lost her mother early, and the single-hearted French peasant almost supplied the place of one to her, though but a girl herself. In subsequent afflictions, Manette was ever near to comfort and to guard; and now, as an humble friend, she resided at the château. And yet the humility of the woman never made her forget her station; true, she did not scruple giving her opinion when she deemed her mistress wrong, but it was always respectfully offered, and for some hidden cause, that mistress not only loved but feared her.

As regarded the children, she was perhaps the only person on whose mind Paula's girlish, winning manner had not created more effect than her sister's quieter, serious mood. Manette loved Paula—she was maman nourrice to all; but Henriette and Henri were her children, her own children. To them she clung, them she upheld in all things, as though she felt they more needed her love; and a slighting look or act from father or mother was a signal to her to redouble her affection. She had been a comely girl, and suitors had not been wanting, but she had refused them. She never would leave her children; she had elected them her own, and never, under any circumstances, could

forsake them. Alas! such disinterested, invaluable friends are

rarely found!

Manette was a Catholic, and yet neither by word nor insinuation did she ever seek to undermine the faith of those committed to her care-nay, she often checked questions which might lead to discussion. In this she resembled Père Andriot, which may account for the Baron de Rouvray, a strictly rigid Protestant, permitting the intercourse of two such persons in his family.

Manette followed in the wake of her three "children," who turned frequently to address her, in the joy of their youthful spirits, when Reefer (unmindful of the basket she carried, containing eggs, butter, and sundry other good things, for Mademoiselle Louise, the cure's sister) jumped wildly against her white apron, which bore visible marks of his large paws. Henri in delight incited him to these acts; Paula laughed outright, and even Henriette smiled at the "Vas donc, méchant," of poor

Manette.

They were a happy group, bright, too, and beautiful as the day; and chatting and laughing they reached the village, a pretty little spot, clean, and well ordered. You traversed one long street of humble cottages, and then you came to a large green with lofty trees, and near its centre stood the church. It was a lofty, yet humble and unpretending building: trees surrounded it: you walked up an avenue of elms to the porch. Behind was the grave-yard, with its wooden crosses, on which hung wreaths of immortelles, some freshly placed there, some black and falling to pieces with age and neglect, some fresh of yesterday's wreathing, others that had not been replaced since the day of burial.

Close to the church stood the cure's residence. Vines covered the entire front, whose rich fruit hung above you as you entered the door. Over the porch the clematis fell in profusion, scenting the air around. The windows were open, wooing the entrance of the soft breeze. A small garden was all it possessed in front. They entered. The door was open, unguarded. Who would rob

the bon curé?"

•

Paula bounded in first, followed by the others. "Mon père, mon père," she called in her ringing girlish voice. No reply. "Mademoiselle Louise," she varied her call with; "where are you?" Again no reply. So they walked through the cottage, save Manette, who sat down on the step to rest herself, with her basketful of offerings. A glass door at the other end of the passage opened down a flight of three stone steps into the garden at the back, and this was indeed a fitting place of peace and joy for Père Andriot. It was a beautiful garden; beds of many flowers even now bloomed there; the falling leaves were carefully swept away every morning, and so summer still appeared to reign in that pretty garden. There was no pretension about the place. Espaliers of pears and apples were trained down many of the walks. There were the rich vines in trellised bowers around you. On a large grass-plot was tethered a goat and her kid, the former supplying milk for the homely repasts of the curé and his sister. On the gravel walks wandered some tame doves, cooing in stately gallantry, gravely escorted by a spaniel, a gift of Henriette's, which had been trained to guard the birds from stray cats and vermin.

It was a garden of Eden, a place of peace and beauty. There were three persons at the further end, busily engaged arranging shades over some freshly-planted cuttings. There was Sister Louise, trowel in hand, and, be it truthfully said, spectacles on nose; and Père Andriot, looking down at her work, his hand on the shoulder of a gay young officer in the uniform of a laneer—for it must be stated for the information of those who may not know the fact, that in France it is no proof of bad taste to wear uniform on leave of absence, as is the case in England. It could be but one person—Edgar; but how came he there? The curé knew nothing of his coming, last evening.

Diligences are lumbering things, but even they can bring the yearning heart to its home, and the body with it. There was no railroad there at that time, and when Père Andriot arrived at his gate on the previous night, he found some one there before him—

Edgar, his nephew, his much-wished-for nephew.

Need we depict the meeting, and the joy of all—even of sister Louise? For be it stated, though as leniently as possible against her, she was a very worldly woman. But even she rejoiced at her nephew's return. And now they stood in that peaceful garden, setting some cuttings Edgar had brought from Algiers for his

uncle.

Edgar Andriot was not exactly handsome, yet the mind and intelligence in his face made him appear so. There was an extraordinary charm in his conversation, which was lighted up by flashes of unstudied wit. In height he was slightly above the middle stature, and graceful and lithe in figure. He had the very smallest hands imaginable—perhaps they were too much so for a man, but so nature had willed it; the feet were equally proportioned. On the handsome upper lip was a small and finely-grown moustache, the ends curling upwards, en Hongroise, which gave much character to his face. One-and-twenty laughed out in every gesture and smile, in light-hearted gaiety. He wore his uniform to-day to please his aunt, and his décoration, in all its splendour of glory to a young soldier, for he had gallantly won it.

Père Andriot and Louise had a brother once, a gallant fellow too, who served his country and empereur faithfully; but he nearly perished in the retreat from Moscow, and came home to die, a poor captain—with little but his name to leave his child, a fine handsome boy, and an orphan. Père Andriot, to whose youth more ambitious prospects had opened than priesthood, had just then, seeking "that peace which the world cannot give," taken holy orders; and in the calm of his little village home, where we have just seen him, he brought up his orphan nephew. He would fain have seen that his inclinations tended to the church, but when Edgar expressed a wish for a more active life,—

"Go, my child," said the curé, "in the world are many bright

spots-may one of those be thine. When they tell thee that it is a wilderness of darkness, believe them not—it is a beautiful world. though in it are many paths; those who find one of shade—all shade—do well to seek a place of rest. Such have I done; but for you, mon enfant, may le bon Dieu send you one of sunshime." And Edgar put on his uniform with delight the day he quitted

St. Cyr, for his regiment and Algiers. Glad now was the meeting to all: it seemed as a brother's return, for Edgar had been their playfellow, and the companion of their youth. Over one brow alone came a cloud-Henri's-as he surveyed the gallant soldier, and thought of himself. "a doomed bird of night," as he termed churchmen. It was not envy of the youth, but of his station—he, the proud baron's only

son. and Edgar only a lieutenant, on his pay.

Père Andriot inquired anxiously the result of the previous

evening's fracas. Henri gloomily detailed all.

"I have done it for peace sake," he said, "but I'll never be a clergyman; I hate that Bruton, and wouldn't resemble him for the world—a cold, systematic automaton, all black cloth and white neckerchief-no impulse, no kindly sentiments. A string of scriptural texts badly delivered, no more.

"Hush, my son!" said the curé, "you should not speak thus of He may be cold in outward seeming, but who may read the heart? Moreover, he is a bearer of heaven's message to man -that alone should command your respect," and even while he

chid, he pressed the hand, to soften the rebuke.

The conversation soon became general, and Edgar, with graceful modesty, while relating many anecdotes of Arab and tent, spoke little of himself. But there, glittering on his breast, was the décoration of honour, and a scar, still red, on the handsome brow, spoke its own tale, and added to, rather than deteriorated from, the manly beauty of the young hero.

Nothing would satisfy the trio, but carrying him home with them to the château, to renew his acquaintance with their parents. "You must come," cried Paula. As ever, her word was law;

and once more they all were on their way, with this addition to

their party.

Edgar was most kindly received by the baron, and even Madame de Rouvray had a faint smile for the youth; and Bruton having returned early that morning to his ecclesiastical duties at Tours. the curé and Sister Louise were sent for, and easily persuaded to

join the family group at the château.

It was somewhat strange, that with two lovely daughters, the parents felt no alarm at so close an intimacy with the poor nephew of a priest. But no; Madame de Rouvray was too much absorbed in her religious duties and private sorrows, to notice any worldly affair, unless it were immediately placed before her observation. while the baron was too proud to imagine for an instant the possibility of such an event. He looked upon it, that he was conferring an immense honour on the poor curé, in the condescension he showed him, and of course, both he and Edgar must feel it as such.

He quite forgot the warm passions which had led his own youth

into many errors; in this, he resembled parents in general.

De Rouvray was far from a wealthy man. He expended his entire income in improving his estate, one of the show ones of the neighbourhood, and in keeping up a certain dignity, for the sake of his family. Poor, till his father's death, and living on a small allowance, he now knew the full value of wealth, and he resolved, if possible, that his daughters should marry richly and well, although he could give them but small dowers. And while he insisted on Henri's choosing a profession, any idea of obtaining wealth by mercantile means was scouted, as degrading to one of

his family. In the church he had interest to advance him.

Coupled with his ardent desire of aggrandizement by marriage of his daughters, was a strange determination in the mind of that cold, proud man—almost the only human feeling, except his lowever for Paula and affection for his wife—namely, a resolution, however he might urge or strive to lead, never to control the inclinations of his daughters. Some hidden motive evidently gave rise to this: he felt assured they never would choose beneath them—they were his flesh and blood. For Henriette, he had mentally fixed upon Bruton as a husband. He was of an excellent English family, the son of a bishop, and with a good private property. He had for awhile, on account of delicate health, accepted the spiritual care of the Protestant portion of the community, in that neighbourhood, as the climate had been recommended him.

Henriette would marry Bruton, and become the wife of a clergyman of good family, transferred to England's shores, and a rich living. Thus he had arranged it in his own mind, and he was not without foundation for the wish, as it had not escaped his observation, that the stern, unsmiling clergyman looked with more than a friendly eye on his daughter. Opposition from her to his wishes, he never dreamt of. "She has seen no one to love; then why

efuse him?"

But the mind creates its own idol too often, and loves the creation it has itself made. Henriette, the warm, generous-hearted

girl, could never willingly marry Bruton.

A godmother of the twins had died about a year before our tale commences, leaving all she possessed, that was in her power to leave to them, in equal proportions. It was not much—a thousand pounds a-piece; but that was settled on them, and was entirely at their own disposal. She, like some others, had read the strange aversion in the baron's heart towards them, and dying, left them, though small, an independence secured against his will or caprice. Thus stood matters on the day Edgar Andriot returned to his home and playfellows.

CHAPTER IV.

Days and weeks passed on, and Henri, urged to it by his sister, sulkily rode over to Bruton's occasionally, to pursue his distasteful

readings.

One day, on his return, as his sister strolled down the road to meet him, she plainly saw by the impatient manner in which he struck his boot with his riding-whip, that something more than ordinary had occurred. His mare's rein hung unheeded on her neck: he was close to his sister before he noticed her. She saw the cloud, and (like a vain gleam of sunshine in a stormy sky) endeavoured by her smile to disperse it; but it might not be. Henri sprang from his saddle, and holding the rein walked beside her, speaking only in monosyllables for some moments. At last he burst forth.

"By heavens, Henriette, I'll bear it no longer! this day I am resolved to demand an explanation from my father. I could bear

much for myself: but for you"-he stopped.

Henriette grew pale; something checked her heart's beating.

and stilled it.

"You," he continued; "not content with trying to sacrifice me, you too must suffer; but as I live, it shall not be!" and the thick veins in his forehead attested his rage.

"Henri, what can you mean?"

"Mean, mean?" he re-echoed. "That you are destined by the baron—I will not call him father—to become that fellow Bruton's wife. Much as I love you, Henriette," and his voice sank to a tone of concentrated passion, "I would see you dead at my feet first!—You, his wife,—that cold man, old enough to be your father: you, my own warm-hearted girl," and his voice trembled with emotion.

"Oh, Henri, you must mistake; it cannot be," and she grew

pale, as she felt it might.

"But I tell you it is so; Bruton told me; and you are to be taken to England, away from me, and Paula, and Manette,-from all who love you; and I am to read, take orders, and succeed him here, -here!" and he laughed aloud in derision.

The tears stood in her eyes, as she vainly tried to soothe him:

she scarcely thought of herself.

"Let us go," he cried, "go with the small independence we can command; let us make a home for ourselves apart from them. They wish us gone, let us go."

"Go, Henri! but where? that can never be!"

"Anywhere," he answered, "so they do not part us, nor force you to marry that man. Believe me, there would be few to regret us—Paula might, and Manette, and Père Andriot."

"And Edgar," whispered Henriette.
"Ay, Edgar; but he is going back to fame and active life.
What should we be to him?"

She did not answer, but her eyes sought the ground. After a pause she looked up.

"What did Bruton say?" she asked.

"Say? Why he spoke of loving you, of having our father's consent. and seemed to think yours unnecessary. However, I told him that might be wanting; he stared, and I said-I scarcely know what I said—but we parted in bitter enmity."

"Oh, my brother," she exclaimed, weeping, "oh, why do this? you will suffer, whilst I might have arranged all-borne all."

"And married him?" he cried, stopping and facing her.

"No, not that," she answered, shuddering; "I could not marry. and not love."

"That's my own Henriette!" and he placed one arm around

"No, while I have life, they never shall sacrifice you."

"I am never very gay," she said, whilst her tears trickled down her cheek. "If sometimes I forget to be grave, melancholy steals back to my heart, like a truant bird home to its cage. Why is it. Henri, that we are less loved than Paula? she never is made sad by unkindness."

"Av. why is it? now you ask that question: once you chid me

for doing so. But to-day I will seek my father and know.

"Oh, no, not to-day, Henri, wait till he speaks of this; it may not be true—wait: let us not rush to meet evils—they are prone enough to come more than half wav."

With much difficulty she persuaded that excited spirit to be calmer; and after a long walk they returned, soothed, if not

stilled.

In the dressing-room of Madame de Rouvray, another scene was

enacting.

"Marie," said the baron, addressing his wife, "if you will for a moment close your book, and listen to a few mundane matters.

which nearly concern us both, you will oblige me."

The baroness closed her religious exercises and looked up: there was always an appearance of alarm on her countenance when summoned to enter into worldly matters—an evident dread of something painful. The baron continued:

"The recent opposition I have met with from that headstrong boy Henri, has made me more than ever alive to the necessity of

separating him from his sister's influence."

"Do you think," she said, gently, "that Henriette is capable of

using hers to oppose you?"

"I am convinced of it, Marie; since her very youth she has been a sullen, silent girl, thinking much, and acting on her own self-willed thoughts."

"I think you mistake her, Paul," answered she; "Henriette has ever been dutiful and obedient to my slightest wish. I think

—I fear you mistake her."

To Madame de Rouvray's credit, she had no preference for any child: they were equally objects of her love, or rather of her apathy, for she seldom, if ever, noticed either of them when not called upon to do so. Her every thought was in her religious duties, and this feeling Bruton rather encourged than checked.

"Mistake her?" he echoed; "can I mistake the behaviour of Henri? and they are one in thought. She is more cunning; she urges, he acts. I am now, however, resolved that things shall be remedied. Henri must take holy orders, and before that can be accomplished, his sister must marry."

"Marry, Paul,—whom?" And her eye gave forth a look of

"Why, Bruton—he has proposed; I have long desired it, and it

"But you would not force her?" her voice trembled. "And she

dislikes him—that you must see."

"Dislikes him; yes, she dislikes all those we love or approve of. I would not force her, God knows, but she must be urged to it. I dread that girl—how different to Paula! For her I have no fear; she is and ever will be a blessing to us: she will never oppose our wishes; but Henriette and Henri are—but it could not be otherwise," he muttered, pacing the room. Madame de Rouvray looked even paler than usual. "And now," he added, stopping before her, "what do you think? Henri has been urged,—for he never would have thought of it of himself—to ask about your relations in England, and he wishes to visit it and them."

"Oh," she almost shrieked, rising from her chair, "not there,

Paul, let him not go there."

"If he were separated from his sister, much might be done. You must exert your influence to induce her to accept Bruton: for many reasons I wish it."

"I have little influence," she said; "but I will speak to Manette:

she can do as she pleases with the children."

"Manette," he cried, impatiently, "though a good, excellent creature, is a mere servant, after all; it is you, their mother, who should do it. I grieve to see it, Marie, but you have little interest in either them or me."

"God knows I have," she uttered, weeping cold, silent tears.
"God knows I have; but when I look upon them, a reproach comes over me. I cannot forget that I had an elder child,

my--

"I know it," he exclaimed impetuously; "I have seen it in your eyes; it is too late now to reproach yourself. You should have remembered all this sooner, and not let his memory war against these."

Her tears fell full and fast. "Oh, Paul," she sobbed, "forgive me, but I cannot forget that boy. When he opened his eyes, and

laughed in my face, that night I---"

"Hush," he cried, hurriedly, and going to the door opened it and looked out. He closed it carefully, and then returning seated himself on the couch, and drew her beside him. "Marie, these are past events, never to be alluded to. Forgive me if I have pained you, but your safety from greater suffering and from discovery lies in the marriage of Henriette, and the submission of

Henri to my wishes. Try what you can do. Come, be calm; I will send Manette to you; she, as you say, can do anything with them: there, be calm, don't fret, Marie," and harsh as he was in general, that man, with almost a woman's fondness, pillowed her weeping head on his shoulder, and endeavoured to soothe her. After awhile she became calmer. Rising, he again pressed her hand in his, and kissed her cold forehead.

"Now, Marie, I will send Manette-and be firm, for much

depends on that," and he quitted the room.

Shortly afterwards Manette entered. When she saw her mistress had been weeping, she flew towards her, and dropping on her knees, took her hands in both of her own, as she would a child's, and endeavoured by every endearing term to coax her into serenity again.

"Ma bonne maîtresse," she cried, "who can have done this? Not Monsieur le Baron. What has he said? not spoken harshly

or unkindly?"

Madame de Rouvray shook her head.

"Then what is it? no news from England?"

"No," whispered her mistress; "but unless you assist me,

Manette, the baron says there may be."

"I!" said she, rising, and at the other's motion to do so, seating herself on the chair,—but only on the edge, the extreme edge—"I! what can I do? Anything, you know I will,—go there—see him—see all—only say the word." She spoke hurriedly.

"No, Manette, ma bonne, you mistake. Listen! I have heard nothing from thence; but Henri, Henri begins to be inquisitive.

wishes to go there, and---'

"Well, it is natural," ejaculated Manette; "he's no longer a

child; cela veut tout savoir."

"And Henriette," continued her mother; "Monsieur thinks

that she is urging him to do so."

"She!" said the woman, indignantly, "she do anything to grieve father or mother? Oh no! Mademoiselle is an angel, and you, madame, should not be one to speak against her. I have seen—she sees too, poor darling—that her father dislikes both her brother and herself. He may have a wrong thought, a false suspicion in doing so; but you—you the mother who bore them, 'tis wrong, 'tis sinful, and I, pawre servante, tell you so." And her eyes flashed, and her cheek grew red.

"Manette, you wrong me, indeed you do," said the baroness, deprecatingly, "but I wish much—Their father," and she emphasized the words, "wishes to see them settled. Henri grows in-

quisitive, I tell you once more.

"What would you have me do?" asked Manette, suspiciously.
"Why, you see, Henri must enter the church; he does not like

it for many reasons; we wish it, and—

"Oh, if that is all," answered the other, "though it is a pity not to see him a handsome militaire like Monsieur Edgar, I'll speak to him. 'Tis a pity indeed he cannot be; but then, as you explained to me one day, madame, it has, or might have incon-

veniences. But the church may make him moins turbulent, pauvre cher enfant! He is a little wild, so I'll do what I can

there. Is that all?"

"And then—Henriette—" the baroness paused: Manette's clear speaking eye was upon her. "Henriette," she continued, after a pause; "we have had an excellent offer of marriage for her. Will you try and make her see it in that light? and accept-

"Whom?" asked Manette.

"A good man, a righteous one, a man to guide her to happiness and peace," (the mother spoke in all sincerity,) "and well, off, too, and who will be richer-

"But who?" asked Manette again.

"Monsieur Bruton, our clergyman."
"I thought so," she replied, coldly; "I have seen it coming to this. I do not speak against him, madame; he may be all you say, but he is a cold man, and severe, ever the first to point out Monsieur Henri's faults to his father. Mademoiselle sees this. and dislikes him. And would you," and her eyes fixed themselves on her mistress, "would you urge, or wish me to urge her to marry a man double her own age, and one she dislikes. for wealth ?"

"Not for wealth, Manette, but for her welfare. He is a good

man. Moreover, she does not love another."

"How do you know that, madame? Monsieur le Baron, with all his caution, allows Monsieur Edgar Andriot to come here like one of the family. I speak conscientiously. Monsieur Edgar is young and handsome, and if his marriage with either of the children would displease, then is he here too much. I never cared for any one myself," she said, simply, "but I know what young hearts will be when they meet some one to love. So do you. madame."

"Good heavens," exclaimed the lady, "can it be?"

"It may, madame. I don't say it is; but it may be. I will speak to mademoiselle; she, chère enfant, always hears me kindly. I will ask her to marry Monsieur Bruton, as madame desires it; but I never will urge her to do so, or advise-for I am sure she would not be happy.

"Advise her, pray advise her, Manette," implored her mistress; "you can do anything with her or Henri: they look upon you as on a second mother," (she might have said as their own,) "beg of

her to consent, and please her father and myself."

"What?" said Manette, sternly, "you, madame, you would have me play on her affection for me, and lead her to unhappiness; when perhaps too she loves another. Have you forgotten Waldron Hall ?

Madame de Rouvray covered her face, and shuddered visibly. "I see you have not," continued the woman; "you must forgive me if I remind you, to save your child from a like fate. Why sacrifice her, and spare in all things Mademoiselle Paula? But I see; it is her father's doing; he'll always retain that cruel thought against those two in his heart."

"He is wrong, Manette, "you know he is wrong," whispered

her mistress.

"I know that," answered the other, "but laissons cela, madame; I will go to mademoiselle and see what can be done. Perhaps she might be happy," she said, thoughtfully, "if she doesn't care for another; she's serious, and older in thought than her years, pauvre enfant; she seems to expect trouble—she's so unlike Mademoiselle Paula. Perhaps it might be best—I'll see." And with eyes fixed on the ground, she quitted that melancholy apartment.

CHAPTER V

MANETTE walked thoughtfully to the door of Henriette's room. It was closed, she gently tapped at it; "Mademoiselle, mademoiselle!"—no answer came. "'Tis I—Manette—open the door, ma fillette chérie!"—still no reply. She tried the lock, it yielded, and in she walked. The room was vacant; in its centre stood a table covered with books, papers, work, all the thousand little companions of an innocent girl's pleasure. The ink was scarcely dry on a piece of paper she had been trying her pen upon, and there lay her book of souvenirs; we will not call it album—it would desecrate that simple manuscript of gentle thoughts and memories, to call it the gilded thing in which everybody is summoned to scribble nonsense, by every sentimental young lady.

No, Henriette's was something of another character, a mere book, in which to register pleasant days and sunny thoughts—an ungilded, homely record. In it were wild flowers, and the date and place where they were gathered; and verses which had

pleased her—sentences which had charmed.

Manette, the almost unlettered peasant, turned the leaves, but out of no curiosity: she had often done so in her dear child's presence; she most dearly loved these evidences of the young, pure mind. There was hair woven in it too, and "Maman, Henri, and Paula," were the three names registered beneath the braids. Where was the father's? not even there was she permitted to

claim a remembrance of him.

Manette sighed, and turned the leaves again. There was a leaf where the gum was scarcely dry, which had fixed the souvenir to the page. With some eagerness the woman opened it. There were two braids of hair there, one some shades darker than the other. The first was light and silken; beneath was a name in an almost unformed girl's writing, with a date four years previous to the last one, where the hair was darkened in colour. Beneath both braids there was one word, 'Edgar.' Manette trembled—beside the last lock was a small bouquet of violets, scarcely withered.

"Too late, too late," she whispered, "mon enfant, pauvre

enfant!" and she closed the book.

"I must see her, and know," thought Manette. And going to the window which looked into the garden, her eye searched below.

On the well-rolled grass-plot stood Paula and Henri; her ringing laugh ascended to where Manette stood, as the girl bounded in light-hearted glee, all grace and beauty, to catch the shuttle-cock which he flung towards her. On a garden seat, a short distance off, sat Henriette and Edgar: the sun peeped down between the thin leaves of the tree above them, to kiss her rich. light-brown hair, which shone like a wave of glittering gold in that caress-her neck was as beautifully turned, and white as the swan's, as she leant over the work which her tiny fingers held. Edgar read to her. At times her soft, serene eyes, with their dark lashes, were raised to peruse his thoughts in unison with hers: then the page was turned, a lighter strain followed, and she looked up and laughed a gladsome laugh, such as Manette had seldom heard from her lips. Then he would for a moment drop the book, and fix a long look upon Paula's flying figure, or laugh with her—laugh until Henriette's "eh bien. monsieur," recalled with her—laugh until Henriette's "eh bien monsieur," recalled him to himself; or some other word playfully spoken, bade him read again awhile, until the furtive glance stole from the page to rest upon a more interesting subject of contemplation—Paula.

"Oh, they are a handsome couple," sighed Manette, "handsome, as her mother and the baron were; oh, far more so, for Henriette has not that look of grief, that madame ever had. And may Heaven keep her from it, and the cause of it! I will go and speak to her;" and she quitted the window and descended to the garden. When she arrived there the scene was changed: the four were standing together on the grass. They looked so happy that she could not bear to draw Henriette away—to sorrow, perhaps. As

she appeared, Henri bounded towards her.

"Maman Manette," he cried, seizing her hands, "come and dance, dance and sing, I have a respite of months before they make a corbeau of me. Paula has interceded with my father, and I am not to be urged further at present; I have months to decide in, provided I am a good boy and do not say naughty things to oppose him." And he mimicked the tone of a child. "There is news for you, Manette, dance! dance!" And the wild youth playfully dragged her about the sward. "Well," he cried, stopping at last, and holding her at arm's length, "you do not congratulate me; smile, laugh, Manette," and his radiant countenance tried to win hers to sympathy. She looked grave; her woman's sagacity told her that some deep prospective motive had dictated leniency towards Henri on his father's part.

"I rejoice," she said, at last, but with a forced smile, "at anything which makes you happy; but do not too soon abandon yourself to your good fortune. Your father has but given you time

for reflection.

Henri's brow was overclouded.

"Méchante!" he cried, "you damp my only glimpse of happiness for weeks past by evil prognostications," and he released her as he spoke. Before she could reply, Père Andriot descended

from the salon to join the group. All the children flew to meet him, and clung around him like bees round their hive. The père directed an uneasy glance at his nephew. "Edgar," he said, "I thought you were going to Tours, to see some of your old schoolfellows; you encourage him here too much, mes enjans; he will grow luxurious, and unfit for his rude African life again."

Edgar coloured slightly.

"Don't scold him," said Paula; "I bade him stay; he could not refuse my commands," and the beautiful girl drew herself up

in mock dignity.

"It was, mademoiselle," he replied, recovering his composure; "you were occupied with Henri; I remained—not, I own, an unwilling guest—at mademoiselle's desire, to read to her whilst she worked," and by a look he designated Henriette.

The curé glanced anxiously from one to the other. Henriette was like a ruddy peach; Paula calm, smiling, and unconcerned. Manette closely scanned her child's countenance—its blush made

her sigh.

"Mon père," said Henriette, "I will go for the book you lent me," and she ran towards the house to cover her confusion. Manette followed. The former bounded up the stairs and entered her room. Another step more slowly came after; before she closed the door it stopped beside her.

"Manette," she cried, starting.

"Yes, my child, Manette, ta maman nourrice, who comes to speak to you—" she closed the door. Henriette grew pale—she scarcely knew why; it was a presentiment—that spectre which so often drives the colour from the cheek.

"I would speak to you, mademoiselle," she said more coldly,

"about—about——"

"Not mademoiselle," cried the other, "your child, your Henriette; and not so coldly, maman chérie, but thus, thus," and the child of grace and nature seated herself on her nurse's knee, and placed her young loving arms round her neck. "Now," she continued, trying to smile, "speak,—what is it?"

Manette clasped both arms round that pliant waist. "Mon

Manette clasped both arms round that pliant waist. "Mon enfant, then," she said, "I have had a long, serious conversation with your mother, and she bade me speak to you in her own and your father's name."

"About what?" asked she.

"About marriage, ma fille—there, the word's out. I do not like the task, but better, perhaps, from your old nurse, who loves you,—that is," she corrected her thought, "who knows you so well. You will speak freely to her, because, though they love you too, parents sometimes frighten children's free words away."

"Marriage!" replied Henriette, only thinking of the word;

"marriage-with whom?"

Manette looked down embarrassed. She shrank from her task.

"With Monsieur Bruton? is it not, maman?"

The other looked up amazed, yet pleased; half her pain was removed: her child knew all.

"Yes." she answered, "yes; who told you?"

"Henri; he told me this morning; but—but, when we returned from our walk, Paula had pleasant news to tell of her intercession with my father; and then—"she paused. "Edgar came," she continued, and we were all so happy, I forgot." As she spoke a slight blush arose, and then fled, leaving her pale and pensive.

"Ay, Edgar," answered her nurse, "and why should his coming make you glad? Oh, my child, beware; I do not speak from experience, but I have seen others love, and it is not always a happy, or wise thing. To that your father would never consent -a poor soldier, and a Catholic. Oh! my child, beware," and the tears filled the good woman's eyes.

"I don't love him," cried Henriette, looking down, "I don't

love him—that is, I think not—except as a dear brother."

They were near the table. Manette disengaged one arm and reached the book, it opened at the last page that had had a souvenir confided to it.

"And this-P" said Manette.

The girl grew crimson over neck and brow.

"That?" she uttered, "that? When Edgar left four years since, I kept a lock of his hair as a sister's souvenir; when he returned—well the hair was so light, so unlike his now, that but yesterday I asked him for another lock which would not change."

"Till the white of age shall replace the darkness of youth. And where will you both be then? not together, ma fille Henriette, believe me; not together going down the quiet road, as the bon curé said last Sunday, when he exhorted the young couple he had married that morning, that quiet road, strewed with good deeds and children's prayers, and not a bramble there to cling to their garments, or a rough stone to make the road to the grave rugged.' I remember every word, for I thought and praved for you then." Henriette clasped her closer, and wept aloud.

"Do you think," she sobbed, gazing in her nurse's face, "that such would be my path with Monsieur Bruton?—Speak truly, do

"No, Henriette, mon enfant," and she looked up boldly in her face, rectitude of thought and deed in every line of her honest countenance: "no, not even to please your mother, can I against my conscience say so. I do not think he could make you happy, so I will never ask you to marry him." As she spoke, she gently disengaged Henriette's arms, and stood up.

"And my mother bade you ask me?"
"She did."

"And my father too?"

"I did not hear it; but he had done so."

"Then God help me, Manette!" and she grew calm and cold, "for they will urge it on me, and I would rather die ten thousand times than marry, and not esteem or respect; for though I would not say so to Henri, I believe Bruton an unchristian man, coldly estranging father from son, -for he could do much to soothe and make peace. He but inflames my brother's spirit."

"And Monsieur Edgar," said Manette, "you have not spoken of him: tell me truly, do——" Before the sentence could be completed Henri burst into the room.

"This is too bad, Henriette," he cried: "here you are chattering with Manette, and we are waiting for you to take a long

walk: Père Andriot is going with us; pray make haste!"

As he entered, his sister turned hastily away, to conceal her tearful eves.

"I will come directly," she answered, searching about the room: "I cannot find Pere Andriot's book."

"Oh, never mind that; where's her bonnet, Manette; or-we're only going into the woods-take your garden-hat in the hallcome along."

"There, méchant gamin," said Manette, pushing him from the

room, "go down; she shall come in a moment."

"Well, one moment, or I'm here again," and he ran down

stairs.

"Bathe your eyes, ma fillette, there," and she took a towel and removed the sad traces from her child's face, caressing her as she did so, as though she were still indeed a child. "There, now go and walk, and be tranquil. While poor Manette lives, she'll stand by you, don't fear;" and with a kiss she sent her sorrowing girl to join the others.

CHAPTER VI.

HENRIETTE remained by the curé's side: something had arisen in her mind, engendered by Manette's manner and words, to make her avoid Edgar. Henri never attached himself exclusively to any one in their walks, but flitted to and fro, hither and thither, like a leaf blown about by the winds.

Edgar and Paula were left chiefly to themselves, though not quite uninterrupted, for Père Andriot appeared most uneasy in his mind, and was continually turning to watch the two. And

thus they walked on.

After conversing some time on indifferent subjects, Père Andriot at last introduced the name of Monsieur Bruton. Cautiously, and with evident disinclination, he endeavoured to lead his companion into a conversation relative to that man-mere passe-temps obviously did not guide his wishes. She looked fixedly up in his face, as he spoke.

"Mon père," she said, "there is something more than purposeless conversation in your questions. Who has spoken to you of Monsieur Bruton?"

The curé looked embarrassed, and did not reply. "Is it my father, or my mother?" she inquired. "Why attempt to deceive you?" he said at last; "it was Monsieur le baron. He asked me to sound you as to your feelings respecting that gentleman, and to tell you his wishes. I answered him that I would ask you what were your thoughts, since he desired it, but I could not lead you into the avowal of opinions you might regret giving utterance to."

"Thank you, mon bon père; but tell me all, now, candidly."

"Well, then, ma fille, Monsieur votre père is anxious naturally to see you settled in life. Though he is not an old man, still time creeps on, and a good father does not like to leave his daughters behind him unprotected; he feels that Madame la baronne, with all her strong affection, is not fit to brave the storms of life for you."

The good man tried to excuse to the child the message he was

bearer of from the father.

"And," said Henriette, "he wishes me to marry Monsieur Bruton, a man nearly his own age, and, from his ill-health, more likely to leave me unprotected, than if I remained at home." She spoke somewhat bitterly.

"Hush," he said gently, but seriously; "you must not judge your father. He may have other good reasons you are ignorant of."

"He has motives, mon père; good, I cannot say, but he has evidently hidden ones; and am I called upon to meet them, like spectres, in darkness?" She had never spoken so warmly before. "And," she continued, "must it not strike every one, and you, mon père, that if he, a conscientious man, felt the uprightness of these motives, he would disclose them himself, or employ my mother to do so, and not impose that task, an ungracious one, on your kindness, or solicit the influence of a servant, good as she is—I mean Manette?"

"I did not know this," he said, surprised. "When?"

"A few moments before we started, and at my mother's desire. And even Monsieur Bruton himself has never spoken openly to me, only a word to Henri. Oh!" she cried, impetuously, "they make me hate every covert thing which dares not face the light!

There must be some strange mystery in all this.'

"Henriette," he said, very gravely, fixing his eye searchingly upon her, "I have never seen you thus hasty before; why is it? Are you certain your own heart does not foster some forbidden; impossible wish, that you thus pause, consider, and object, my child," and his voice became tremulous. "There are hidden rocks in our own hearts; we should carefully avoid in our voyage of life, all waves and tempests. Love is one, whether for an unworthy object, or for one who might chance to be an object of aversion to our parents."

Henriette coloured. "I hope," she said, after a pause of an instant, "I may never love, where they might object. I am certain I never should love one whom I could not esteem above all others. Surely no parents could refuse consent, if mutual affection united two hearts—even should he be poor, but one of whom a woman might feel proud, for his——," she stopped: the

tongue had almost betrayed the heart's secret. "Neither," she added, taking up another branch of the subject, "should parents urge, where every feeling is against the match. I never could marry Monsieur Bruton, and hope to be happy. But forgive me, mon père; I am talking in all the warmth of a foolish girl's heart, to one whose sacred calling makes him a stranger to our earthly weakness of affection."

"Do you think, mon enfant," he replied, sadly, "that we never listen to tales of human love, and human sorrow, when the young heart, overburdened, flies to our ear for relief? Undeceive yourself; and should a day of such sorrow fall upon you, come to me.

my child, and find sympathy from the pauvre curé."

"There are pages," continued the curé, "so sad, in the book of life, that we close it, hoping to shut them from our sight, but when we take that volume in our hand to read, 'tis ever at that leaf it opens, and we read—read on the page blotted so often with our bitter tears. There is one page I have learnt to read with resignation, but it cost a struggle of years. I never thought to expose its characters to a stranger eye; but, ma, fille, it may be a wholesome lesson to you—may teach you how much we can bear, and yet survive, and in the cheerful peace of after years, teach others to bow to earthly trials, and look beyond. So you, Henriette, whom I have known and loved from infancy for your many excellent qualities—it will teach you confidence in one who has known earthly hopes and worldly love.

"You?" exclaimed she, "you have known care and worldly

sorrow? you, the placid, but cheerful priest?"

"Mon enfant, I was not always a priest, nor destined to the priesthood; I chose it, when the world cast me like a weed upon the water, drifting and worthless; thus I turned to my only place of peaceful rest on earth, where alone I might learn the hard lesson—resignation. I thank Heaven I have found it, and can raise the earth from my buried hopes, that you may gaze upon the graves beneath, and learn, should you sorrow, where to look for repose." He paused and looked upon her as one destined to find many a

bramble in her path.

"Twenty-five long years have gone by," he said at last; "I was then of that age. My father was left early a widower, with three of us; he cultivated his small property, principally of vines, near Bordeaux. Edgar's father, my eldest brother, my sister Louise and myself, comprised his family. My brother chose the carrière des armes, and became a soldier. Louise never married, and I remained at home to assist my father. In our quiet little village here, the then curé was a relative of ours, a good Christian, and light-hearted too—he had not known sorrow. My brother was away with his regiment, a soldier of fortune. Sometimes Louise came here on a visit to the curé, sometimes I. When I arrived, it was a signal among all the good, hospitable villagers to prepare for gaiety and amusement, and no one delighted in it more than myself.

"During my occasional visits I had become attached, with all

the warmth of my twenty-five years, to Marie Anna, the daughter of a man of small but comfortable means, acquired in business, from which he had retired before I knew them. They lived in that old house on the hill, now dilapidated and uninhabited, then all life and hospitality. I like it better as it is, ma fille—I could

not bear to see young, thoughtless faces there.

"Marie Anna was just seventeen, and save that she had not your noble air, not unlike you, but livelier: more like Paula in disposition. I think I see her now, flitting like a spirit before my path, so light of heart, all laughter and anticipated joy. On account of her youth, and my not having any positive position, our marriage was deferred awhile, but I was welcomed as an accepted suitor, by both father and mother. There was a deputé at Bordeaux, a friend of my father's, who had promised all his interest to place me in some government situation in Paris. I took leave of Marie Anna and went thither. They say there are many great temptations for youth in that gay city. I found none. She was ever beside me, talking to me, encouraging me, when disappointed hopes for awhile invaded my heart. Months passed; we wrote constantly: but what are even letters when they speak of prolonged absence and of fading hope—for mine began to wither away.

"One day, after I had been months in Paris, Monsieur le deputé sent for me—he had succeeded; I was nominated to a situation in the War Office. The salary was not much at first; but enough, quite enough, to commence life with. Life to me was my union with Marie Anna. That day I wrote announcing my intended

return.

"At last the day of departure came. All was arranged, and I had a month's leave given me from my office in which to marry and bring my wife to Paris. I dwell on all this now, ma fille; I never have spoken of it before. I live it over again—this shadow of

twenty-five years gone by.

"As the heavy diligence journeyed to this quiet spot, my pulses beat as those of one in a fever. I could not remain in the banquette, where my place was, and see the wild-looking horses and the strenuous postilion urging them up the hills, as he walked by their sides. So I descended, and ran up, ran down the road, perhaps a mile, as though it brought me nearer to her. At last we arrived within half a league of the town, yonder—there the diligence stopped, and I was to take another conveyance to this village. Judge my delight to find that my Marie Anna's impatience equalled my own. At that half league we met her and her father, in a light carriage, awaiting me."

He paused and sighed deeply, as though the day and hour of sorrow stood beside him then. Henriette pressed his arm, and

whispered, "pauvre Père Andriot."

CHAPTER VII.

"IT was the autumn of the year, a little later than this," continued the curé. "There had been much heavy rain, and from the damp, which was its consequence, sickness had arisen in the neighbourhood. Many had been taken ill, and I impatiently looked forward to the day in which I should remove Marie Anna to a more healthy abode: - the woods around and many stagnant ponds, which have since then been filled up, made it a likely spot for fever to be engendered in. Where those new houses now stand, there was only one, which was inhabited by an aunt of Marie Anna, whose two daughters were to be her bridesmaids. It was at their house my intended wife was to dress on the wedding morning, and accompanied by them and others, meet me at the church.

"The evening before the day which was to give her to me at last arrived. I, of course, had been with her nearly the whole of that day. She was light-hearted and happy as ever, with not a cloud on her brow, for she did not feel the separation from her parents so much, in the certainty of soon seeing them in Paris; and the excitement of visiting that large city—a long dream of pleasure to be accomplished—left no room for regret in her heart. I had been absent, arranging all for our departure, for a couple of hours. Meanwhile evening had come on. As I entered the room where she sat awaiting my return, I thought she looked pale. When I mentioned it, her mother attributed it to her anticipation of the morrow, and a natural nervousness at leaving all she had so long loved; and her dear face brightened so brilliantly as I spoke to her, that my first alarm quite subsided.

"'Put on your shawl,' I said, 'Marie Anna, and we will walk over to your cousins'; they are very busy with their dresses, and

want to see you a moment.

"Her mother slightly objected. 'Why take her out in the cold

air? they could not require her.

"'But,' I urged, 'I want her to come and see how prettily they have arranged the church with green boughs, and to-morrow there

will be garlands of flowers.'

"She flew to put on her shawl. Marie Anna, my child, was only a simple village girl, and, except on Sundays, wore but a little muslin cap over her beautiful hair, sometimes not even that. Well, we started off. First we entered the church—the church where I now exhort to patience, ma fille. It was hung with evergreens, and flowers cut out of coloured paper; the natural ones were to be placed fresh on the morrow. She was delighted with all I showed her, and was as gay as a happy child. As we approached the altar something like a sad look came involuntarily over her face: I loved her so well, that my eyes scarcely over quitted her countenance: she stopped, withdrew her arm from mine, and dropping on her knees, prayed long and fervently. was surprised; for though she was a good, religious girl, it was unlike one of her light-hearted, joyous impulses. I was more astonished when, as she rose, I beheld that the thick lashes of her eves were moist with tears. She took my arm again, her tone was tremulous.

"'Mon ami,' she whispered, 'j'ai froid.'
"Her whole frame trembled as she spoke."

"'Let us leave this,' I said, 'the green boughs make it damp." "We passed out: little was said,—we walked briskly until we

reached her cousins'.

"There all was gaiety and mirth: the girls were busy arranging their dresses for the ceremony on the morrow: Marie Anna's was laid out all ready on the bed in an inner room. I dwell on these things. Henriette: but trifling as they may appear, each of their trivial memories revives a thousand pangs.

"There lay that dress,—I see it now—its purity of whiteness. the long lace veil, and the wreath of orange blossoms and bouquet. I stood gazing on them; a strange feeling was creeping over me -a pang: it came and went.—A cry from the girls' voices aroused

"'Put them on, Marie Anna, put them on,' they cried. resisted a moment, then the child prevailed over the woman. She consented, and pushing me from the room, they commenced dressing her. In a few moments she stood before me: her cheek was flushed with excitement, the lip smiled in curious triumph at her beauty. If she looked proud, it was excusable, for she was very fair to look upon. Her aunt joined in the praises, and added, You only want your alliance on your finger to complete the picture.

"'The alliance, the alliance,' cried the girls.

"I took the ring from my pocket, and in mock ceremony placed it on her finger! Alas! alas!" and he paused again, sighing heavily.

"Marie Anna," he continued, "would not give it back to me." "'Not till to-morrow,' she said; 'I have a préssentiment you

will lose it.

"At that moment a neighbour entered. She started on seeing

Marie Anna in her wedding dress.

"'Child,' she said, 'it is unlucky to dress in all your marriage robes before the day. And the alliance, too! Take them off, take them off,' and she crossed herself, as if to avert some ill-fortune.

"I do not know whether the words affected Marie Anna, but when she re-entered in her walking dress she looked pale and sad. "'Mon ami,' she said, turning to me, 'let us return: it grows

late.

"'And the ring?' I said, holding out my hand for it.

"'No,' she said, 'a strange whim, but I shall keep it till to-

morrow

"I did not urge its return, so we departed homewards, after receiving a host of cautions to 'come early,' 'not keep them waiting, &c. We spoke little on our way; my heart was too full to speak much. I have since, recalling every action on that

evening, remembered that as we left the door, she wrapped her shawl round her, shivering, and said, in a suppressed tone, 'J'ai bien froid.' And yet we had been out much colder nights, and her young blood had not felt their chill. When we entered her home, she threw off her shawl, and even the cap which confined her hair, saying, almost in agony, 'I am suffocated, maman, I am choking.'

"'You have walked fast, my child,' answered her mother; then turning to me, added, 'Go, my son, the poor child is excited, and

needs rest: go: à demain.'

"I turned to Marie Anna. A dew stood on her brow; she was pale as ashes; she rose from her chair, into which she had sunk, and taking my hand, said,

"' Adieu, Jacques, mon ami.'

"'Not adieu,' I cried, 'I hate that word.'

"'A revoir,' she answered, throwing her arms round my neck,

'A revoir, mon bien aimé.'

"I thought, as I passed out, how sad and pale she looked, and unlike herself. I paused a moment, wishing to return; then consoling myself with the thought that perhaps she had been overexcited, I walked on.

"I was staying at the cure's, in the house I now live and am at

peace in, Henriette.

"I retired to bed at once: the curé had been long at rest.

"The day had scarcely dawned, when I heard a heavy knock at the front door. My light sleep was soon broken. I started up. "Was it time to rise?" No, it could not be. So I waited an instant; the knock was repeated. I hastily put on my clothes, and hurried down. When I opened the door, Marie Anna's father stood before me. He looked wild; he did not know me, but pushing past, flew rather than walked, to the curé's room. I followed—how I know not—for I trembled like a leaf. He entered. The père always burnt a light at night. He started up in alarm at this sudden intrusion.

"' Mon père,' said Marie Anna's father, taking his arm, 'come

-come quickly: she asks for you.'

"'Who?' answered he, looking around in amazement.

"'My child, my daughter,' replied the other. 'She is dying;' and the words opened the flood-gates of sorrow, and his tears fell down in torrents.

"I waited to hear no more. I awoke from my stupor when I stood in the room where I had last seen her, and listened to her

incoherent raving in the next one."

The curé paused, and walked on some moments in silence. Even

after that lapse of time his tears would not be restrained.

"We will pass over the next dreadful day, and the next," he said, at last: "on the third, I entered the little church; the green boughs were there, and flowers now faded, which the children had strewn the chapel with early on our wedding morning, ere the truth was known. Before the altar, where she knelt and prayed her last prayer, she lay in her coffin. At her request, when the approach of death restored her to her senses, she implored to be buried in

her wedding robes. And there she lay, my bride, in her veil, her wreath, her bouquet-nothing was wanting. Even the alliance was there, which wedded her to the grave! She had died of typhus fever, which had evidently lain dormant in her system for days. I saw her laid in the earth; I saw all around me weeping, and then my heart turned to bitterness-I could not bow to Heaven's decree. I fled—I know not to this day where I wandered all that dreary one. I have an indistinct remembrance of visiting every favourite haunt of hers. At nightfall I returned home sullen and resolved. I entered by the back door, and reached my room unseen. Securing my pistols, I descended the stair, but one thought in my mind-suicide. I would kill myself on her grave. A thought, a wish came over me ere I reached it—to see again the spot where she had stood in life and loveliness, in her bridal robes. reached her aunt's: the door stood half open: I entered, and heard weeping and prayer: the old woman was on her knees, her hands clasped in supplication, whilst the tears coursed down her cheeks. Some one—I scarcely know the person even now—took my hand, and led me to that inner room where we had stood together—there, on that bed, lay, as though in sleep, her cousins, her bridesmaids. They had caught the infection, and now lay there dead—the dead of an hour! I staggered from that room. and kneeling beside the widowed, doubly bereaved mother, prayed, as I had never prayed before: since then, all is clear and distinct I rose an altered man. I felt how much more she was afflicted than I. She had lost all, the prop of her old age; whilst I still had youth, and a father's, sister's, brother's love.

I now felt that life could have no earthly tie for me. I gave up my appointment, and entered the college at St. Omer; there fifteen years of my life passed. At the expiration of that time, the old curé here slept with those whom he had led so many years to peace and heaven. By the interest of friends, I obtained my last wish on earth, for myself—the cure here. I have now been its occupant ten years. When my father died, Louise came to reside with me; soon my brother followed to the grave, leaving me his son, my Edgar. Heaven in mercy sent me its peace and resignation; and often when at night I am called to visit the sick or dying, as I cross the fields when the vapour in white wreaths rises from the damp earth, I smile; for I fancy it my Marie Anna, in her bridal robes, a bride of heaven, who flits by my side, leading me to the afflicted on earth. And now, mon enfant, remember; when the cares of the world fall upon you, you will know where to turn for resignation and sympathy—to your Father in heaven. and the poor curé on earth, who has known mortal love and mortal

He ceased, and pressing her hands tenderly in his, stopped before a cottage door. Henriette could not speak: her emotions

suffocated her.

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CHAPTER VIII.

PERE ANDRIOT entered the cottage: after remaining there a

brief space he rejoined them.

"Mes enfans," he said, "I cannot accompany you, my prayers are needed here by a sick woman. Go; the young should not forget that they are so; go and amuse yourselves in the wood; Edgar, I shall expect you at home when I return—I wish to speak to you."

So saying, he entered, and they departed, but not exactly in the order in which they had first started. Edgar had loosened Paula's arm when they stopped, and now offered it to Henriette, who had been saddened and made thoughtful by the poor cure's story; but there was electric power in Edgar's touch, for with its pressure her cheek resumed its colour, and her hip its smile. Henri seized Paula round the waist, and despite her resistance, hurried her towards the road, leaving the others to themselves for awhile.

For some time the conversation of Edgar and Henriette was of a desultory character, being merely on passing objects and scenes, by degrees it became more connected; he spoke to her of places where he had been. He described fields of battle and midnight marches, of orders, counter-orders, the excitement of pursuing and manœuvring against a wily enemy, and then something of the regret he felt in warring with a noble foe; it was a feeling which, as he made it intelligible to her, partook less of the desire of glory than of the love of country. He spoke as a brave man might speak who is also a good one.

who is also a good one.

"And yet," he said, "the heart becomes inured to ferocity; and sitting round our watch-fires at night, we hail with pleasurable excitement the anticipated fight of the morrow, which may make us conquerors or conquered, prisoners or dead! There, around those fires you see faces once of almost feminine softness, bronzed by climate or scarred by wounds, and the young officer, with his mother's beauty still to be seen in his countenance, talking of deeds of blood, at which, in our calmer moments, we shudder."

"And yet you desire to return to all this," said Henriette.

"Yes; for it is my chosen path. I could wish, perhaps, my field of action were one having a juster claim on our patriotism than the attempt to conquer Algeria, but we are told to fight, and we do so."

"And do you not feel a regret—a wish to leave it?" she asked.

"Perhaps we all do, when we look on a noble race struggling to preserve their freedom; or when, sitting by those flickering fires, we miss some lip which smiled on us yesterday: or when we bid adieu to a beloved comrade, returning pale, emaciated, and invalided to our own country, la belle France, with but one hand, perchance, to grasp yours, the other being represented by an empty coat-sleeve."

"I have often wondered, Edgar, how you could have chosen a

soldier's life. Not but that the excitement is alluring, but you were such a gentle boy when we were children together. I have seen you cry at the death of a pet bird, and yet now you do not hesitate to take human and unoffending life. Oh, in a just cause, I can well imagine," she added, enthusiastically, "a man freely giving his heart's blood; but otherwise, no!"

"You know not, mademoiselle," he answered, "how we are led on, and yet our hearts—that is, I can speak of my own so—are all tenderness and sensibility. You will wonder when I tell you what has been to me in all the wild excitement of war, a chain

binding me to home and gentler dreams."

"What?" she asked.

"The long ringlet of hair I cut from your head when I left four years ago. I had one, too, of Mademoiselle Paula's, but I lost that."

"Have you mine still?" she asked, blushing.

"Yes; ever with me, and it is as fair as yours is now. Yours has not changed as you tell me mine has. Often when I have been on guard at night, I have looked at that long tress, and it has brought me back to our childish pleasures, these old remembered roads, home, and yourself. And it is ever here," he touched his breast, "here in my portefeuille, and if I am killed, I shall carry that memorial of you to my grave."

"I think," he continued, after a pause, "you would make a true soldier's wife, a brave and dauntless one, following him everywhere, to cheer and urge him on to glory: would you not?"

"I scarcely know," she uttered, in almost a whisper, "I never should marry unless I loved deeply. If I loved, I should fear too deeply for him to incite him to that so-called life of glory.

"Mademoiselle Paula," he continued, "would not like that life. would she? Oh no, I am sure she would not. She has been

spoiled and caressed too much.

"If we love, Edgar, we can brave all—that is, I should think Her last words were said timidly, as though she feared her

own thoughts.

"Oh, she never would!" he replied; "hers must be a life of roses—a pillow of down. And yet," he added, after a pause," "one of our captains had a daughter, a sweet little thing like a fairy: he loved this only child, and she accompanied him everywhere. I have seen her young, bright face after a day of blood, sharing the soldier's hurried meal on the field of battle; or in the more peaceful days, presiding in childish grace at their mess, those rough soldiers involuntarily bowing before her youth and beauty. No unlicensed jest, no harsh word permitted there."

"And where is she now?" asked Henriette.

"She returned in the vessel with me to France, bringing with her a pet deer, and under the charge of our colonel, a man of forty, to whom this child of more than common leveliness has been bartered in marriage-she, a girl of sixteen-for wealth and station.

"Oh! it is a sacrilege," cried Henriette, "a profanation of the

word marriage."

"Yes," he replied, earnestly, "of that state so blessed, so holy, where love accompanies it. When I am far away, the rough soldier again, I shall often remember this day, and our conversation,-will you?" He sighed deeply, and added, almost in a whisper to himself, "but not as I once hoped."

"Often, Edgar, very often," she said, hurriedly.

Before he could reply, Henri rushed towards them, almost dragging after him the helpless Paula; with difficulty she released herself from his grasp and seized Edgar's disengaged arm.

"A l'Anglaise, Edgar," she said: "an arm to each. Henri is

too rough.

"And you so douillette," her brother replied; "come here, Henriette, we will walk together and leave those two dull ones to amuse each other. I see he has bored you to death; you look quite bewildered; come along with le bon Henri." And suiting the action to the word, he drew her arm from Edgar's and led her awav.

Little more passed; the woods were gained, and there they rambled some hours, and only reached home in time for dinner. Edgar could not be persuaded to enter—he had promised his uncle to return—so he left them. Henriette trembled as she gave him her hand; a happy, timid joy lit up her soft eye, as she looked up at him. Even Père Andriot's sad tale was nearly removed from her mind, by the gentle waters pouring in from the stream of her unchecked dream of anticipated happiness. Bruton, even he was forgotten-all save that dream and the joy it brought. Why should we ever wake from such dreams? And a sad voice answers:-"To teach us resignation and a more stable hope than that which is built on man's affection."

The dinner that day was a somewhat silent one. The baron spoke little, indeed scarcely, except in monosyllables, to any one

but Paula; for her there was always a gentle word or smile.

As they rose from the table, Henriette whispered Paula, "Let ns have a walk; I do not wish to remain with my father this evening." She knew he had been urging her mother about Bruton. and she dreaded a tête-à-tête.

Paula looked rather embarrassed for a moment, and her sister could not divine the cause. At last the former said. "Yes. oh. yes, I will but fetch my bonnet; I fear the evening air—wait for

me in the garden."

"Are you dragging Paula out in the cold again?" said the baron, angrily. "Really, Henriette, if you have these restless habits, you should not lead your sister into them."

"I did not think to displease you, sir," she answered, timidly,

"the evening is very fine, and-

"I wish to go, papa," cried Paula, anxiously. "There, Henriette, wait for me, down near the elms," and off she flew for her bonnet, light as a fairy. The baron turned away in displeasure. The baroness had left the room; Henri, too, had flown up-stairs.

to arrange his guns for a shooting party next day; so Henriette, unshawled, unbonnetted, uncared for, stepped out—no parent's voice to bid her be careful of herself. She moved briskly onward towards the elms, to await her sister, and long she walked to and fro, but no Paula came. Once she turned to seek her in the house: a dread of meeting her father withheld her, so she waited in uncertainty where to go, or what to do. A rustle of the withered leaves in the avenue which skirted the grounds, startled her-she tarned, and Edgar stood beside her. A deep blush told her surprise and pleasure.

"You did not expect to see me," he said; "have I startled

you?"

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"You did so, but agreeably—yet how is it you are here?" "I thought I should find some of you," he answered; "I could not remain at home, knowing you were all so near."

"Have you seen Paula?" she asked.
"No," he replied calmly, "I——" he stopped.

"I," said Henriette, "have been waiting here half-an-hour for"

her-where can she be?"

"Never mind Paula," and he gave a peculiar smile; "I dare say we shall soon find her; I want to speak to you before she comes:" so saying, he drew her hand under his arm, and they turned down the avenue.

"I have had a long conversation with my uncle," he said, as they walked on; "and how difficult a thing it is to make the best, the very best (for such he is), of the-I will not say-aged, but no

longer young, enter into your thoughts and feelings."

"Have you spoken of yours to him?" she timidly asked, "what-

ever they may be?"

"Whatever they may be?" He echoed her words, and looked in her face as he did so. "Can you not guess them? but I feel certain you do, and approve-

She was silent—she could not speak.

"Père Andriot," he continued, "was petrified! If I had not felt for his annoyance, I should have been amused, for he raised mountains of impediments, where I saw but mole-hills. I could see no more, loving as I have learnt to love, and being well assured of a return.

"You will meet difficulties, I fear, Edgar," she whispered, and

her voice was low and gentle, tender, yet hopeful.

"Oh! I do not fear them, you, my good angel, by, to encourage and cheer me onward. Apropos," he said, as if on a sudden impulse; "why should the cold ceremonies of life check our speech? why should I not call you Henriette? here, alone, and no grave parents to talk of propriety?"

"Oh do, do," she cried, "I hate 'Mademoiselle' from you."

"Well, then, Henriette, 'dear Henriette,' let it be, as in the days when we were more and less to each other than we are at present; when the boy was fearless, and no cold ceremony stood between us, as now it frowns on the man. How little I then appreciated the happiness. Now, a bit seems ever in my mouth,

and a bridle on my neck, which the rough hand of worldly usage rudely employs to restrain the impulse of feeling.

"But we must bow to those usages, Edgar, or quit society." "True-but here we are unfettered, free; I, to love and to

confess it, and not, I know, to an indifferent hearer."

There was something in this seeming self-confidence which a little grated on her ear. Not once had he asked her love, but took

it for granted that he had gained it.
"I felt," he continued, "that you saw my love; I felt that you understood me to-day, and your half-uttered words gave me encouragement to speak. But your heart will plead for me, will it not? for I know none to equal yours for kindness: I have well appreciated it from boyhood." A half suppressed sigh escaped him, and he looked down in thought.

As the words of hope and affection dropped from his lips, her

frame trembled violently. He looked at her.

"You are cold, Henriette; wrap your shawl about you. El. bien!" he added, looking at her; "you have no shawl. Here, place my cloak on your shoulders, I thought we might perhaps sit on the grass, and so brought it.

There was a strange mixture of indifference and warmth in his He sought to draw the cloak around her heaving bosom, which beat with such wild emotions; but it was coldly.

though affectionately done.

"No," she cried, pushing it back, "I am very warm."

"Warm? then why did you tremble?"

Before she could reply, a hand was on his arm, and a soft, girlish voice said, "Eh bien, Monsieur Edgar, is this the way you keep tryst? I have waited near the orange-trees till I was tired: I verily believe I might have remained till they blossomed, before you would have remembered me!"

Henriette looked amazed; the tone of her sister surprised her. "And here, Paula," she said, "I have waited for you, and you

never came."

"No." answered her sister; "when I went up stairs it was later than I thought. I had promised to meet Edgar near the orangery; I was too considerate, not wishing to keep him waiting; I went there direct," and she glanced strangely at the two.

Henriette felt annoyed; she also began to suspect that there

was some mystery. She could not understand it.

"Now your arm," cried Paula, "and explain how it is I find you here, after awaiting you there?"

"I had much to say to Henriette," he answered; "I wanted her promise and assurance that she would strive to smooth for me a thorny road I shall have soon to encounter. I mean my interview with Monsieur le baron.'

"Oh!" said Paula, "I will clear that; he will refuse me

nothing." She spoke lightly and gaily.

"Chère Paula," was all that dropped from Edgar's lips, but he looked all his gratitude in the eyes she turned upwards to meet his gaze. Henriette said little, for she felt so very happy. Paula then, her dear Paula, knew all; and what opposition had they to fear from her father, with such an advocate to back them. Then, too, she had for a moment felt annoved at Paula's secret meeting with Edgar, kept so sedulously from herself; but now all was explained, for she saw that that meeting had been to consult for her happiness. Running on before them, in light-hearted, happy joy. she mounted the steps of the balcony, and entered the salon: it was empty, so she stepped out again, and calling over the balustrade to the others, told them so: they smiled, and turning, retraced their steps-Henriette was alone.

A moment afterwards, the salon door opened, and a servant announced the cure, who entered, pale and evidently in perturbation.

He approached where she stood.

"Ma fille," he said. "where is your father? I must speak with him instantly."

"I know not, Père Andriot-in the library, I believe; but you

look alarmed,—annoyed: what is it?"
"Do you not know?" he replied, taking her hand; "but no,"

he looked steadfastly at her, "I fear you do not."
"Henriette blushed deeply and dropped her eyes. Raising them after a moment, she said timidly, "It is of-of Edgar, is it not?"

"Yes," he answered, looking puzzled. "Then you know? you

approve? you, you—" he hesitated.
"Yes, mon père," she replied more calmly. "Why deny it? I have suspected it for some time, but was only assured of it to-day. If you approve, I am sure your word and Paula's-for my father loves her well"-almost a sigh escaped her, - "will ensure consent. Why deny the pleasure it affords me? I have-"

"Monsieur le curé," said a servant, opening the door, "Monsieur

le baron will see you in the library.

"A revoir, ma fille," he said; "half my annovance is removed in the assurance of the joy it gives you-I dreaded otherwise. We old men seldom read the young heart aright." He pressed her hand, and went forth smiling, to beard the lion in his den.

CHAPTER IX.

WHEN the door closed and Henriette was quite alone, a sensation of pain crossed her heart; then it began to flutter violently. She felt the moment which was to decide her life's happiness had arrived; how calmly look upon such a moment? She sat a few minutes trying to collect her thoughts, then rising, stepped through the open window on to the balcony. Far in the distance she saw two figures, Paula and Edgar, still in deep conversation. The shades of evening were fast falling; she tried to call to them. to enter, she felt so lonely, but her voice refused to obey; she re-entered the room, and walked to the door and listened. From the library at the end of the corridor she heard a hum of voicesthen her father's was elevated: then she heard the cure's in pleading accents: she could not bear this state of anxiety. Returning to the balcony she leant over it—still the dim shadows of

Paula and Edgar were seen afar.

Just as her foot was on the steps leading into the garden, the salon door opened: she turned; her father and the curé entered, followed by a servant. She shrank behind a large wooden case in which stood an orange plant on the balcony; the servant came out, cast a careless look around, and not seeing any one, passed down the steps and walked towards Paula and Edgar. He had then been sent to seek them; she felt happier, well assured her beloved sister would plead for her. When they mounted the balcony, unseen even by them she quitted her covert, and stole in behind like a guilty thing. Entering, she sat down on an ottoman near the fire, but she could hardly be seen by its dim light, and was at first unnoticed.

It was a gloomy scene: every face wore a look of anxiety—even

Paula's, for the first time.

The baron spoke at last with an effort—he was pacing the room

when they entered.

"Edgar Andriot," he said, stopping before him, as he leant against the mantelpiece, "your uncle has deemed it his duty to inform me of your conversation with him to-day"—he paused for a moment. Paula stood near her sister, and placed an arm round her neck. Henriette silently took her arm away, and grasping her hand, held it in both of her own. The baron continued: "I could have wished things had turned out otherwise, both on account of your difference of creed and of position-a soldier of fortune with only your pay. I can give my child little at present, nevertheless, I have resolved, however I may urge or entreat," (his eye fell on Henriette) "never to control the affections of my children. I have seen the evil of it—when they love worthily, I mean. I-I-" he seemed choking with emotion-"I consent to your marriage with my child."

Edgar grasped his hand. "Monsieur le baron, it shall be the work of my life to show my gratitude to you and my love to her."

"And," urged Père Andriot, deeply affected, "at my death Edgar will have all I possess, which is not very much, to be sure; and Louise, too, will leave him all her little property, and he has rich relatives, though they have never yet noticed us. And—"
"But," said the baron, impatiently, "these are mere expectan-

cies, and until something more positive can be reckoned upon,

they must wait.'

During this scene both girls trembled and clung to each other. "You, Edgar, must return to your regiment awhile; I will exert all my influence to advance you, assured that my child's happiness is bound up in your affection. Paula," he said; she sprang to his side. "Do you, my child, really and truly love Edgar? is your happiness centred in him?—speak!"

"Oh! mon père," she answered, clinging to his arm with one hand, and with the other stretched to clasp Edgar's with infantine grace, her beaming countenance turned towards the latter; "je

l'aime bien, bien!

None saw the look of Henriette, the self-deceived—deceived by her own heart. With one hand she supported herself by clinging to the ottoman, the other was pressed in agony to her breast. In those few moments, those brief words spoken, her hope of happiness fled, the veil was withdrawn from her eyes—in an instant she saw all. Edgar's assurance of being beloved! Alas! another had assured him; his words! they were for another, and her fancy alone had beguiled her, not Edgar. A sense of bitter humiliation came over her in those few moments, then remembering no one knew her secret—yes, there was one, Manette—her heart was stilled, but withered in her young breast. A voice aroused her; it was Edgar's; he took her icy hand; his was burning—he noticed not the death-like chill of hers.

"And here," he said, affectionately, "let me render my deep thanks to you, my sister Henriette. But for your encouraging words to-day, I should never have dared to breathe my love, I might have departed leaving it unspoken; but I saw you understood our affection, and urged me by gentle encouragement to

speak it."

He bent his head and imprinted a warm kiss on her hand: she trembled violently, but strove to restrain her feelings. Alas! love is a selfish passion! he saw nothing of her emotion, but dropping

her cold hand took Paula's.

The baron fixed a dark, scowling look on Henriette. She, then—his bane, his hated child—had urged on this match, in every way distasteful to him, with the son of a mere vigneron. Such a match, and for his darling, too! Perhaps he felt as though a just punishment had fallen on him for boasting to Madame de Rouvray that Paula would never give them uneasiness: the first blow to

his pride had been inflicted by her hand.

Henriette rose, and glided unnoticed from that sad room—that grave of her hopes: she stole up stairs. As the moon shone in the long corridor through the open windows, she shrank, as though it were a living witness of her humiliation. Into her apartmentshe glided, and there, dropping on her knees, for the first time looked up and prayed for help and resignation; only for these, not for happiness, she knew that was gone—not for forgetfulness, for she knew that was impossible—but firmness and resignation.

And she did not pray in vain; and the poor heart grew calmer, and it was still, though sad. She rose to breathe and think—as she turned, a figure stood behind lier; she started—it was

Manette.

"My child," she said, "what is this? What fresh grief has

assailed you? speak, tell your mère nourrice."

Henriette flung herself on her bosom, and, looking up to heaven, prayed forgiveness for having complained in her deep affliction that she had no friend—not one. As she clung to Manette's neck, she felt ske had a sincere one, however kumble, and clasped to that honest and tender heart, she told all—all: his

words, her hopes, and their destruction.

"And now, Manette," she said, when all was concluded, "let it be a sealed book between us. He is my brother now—as such I must love him. More would be sin, Manette, so never even make a reference of this night, ma nourrice, and I will learn to forget it;" and, with the last words, her tears fell fast once more.

Next day the château looked as usual; but in one heart the buds of hope had fallen withered to the ground. The baron, too, looked morose and grieved. Henri was wild with delight; because, in the first place, he liked Edgar, he was just the brother he should have chosen; and next because he saw the match deeply grieved his father—and be it said in sorrowful truth, that not a little pleased him, for he amply returned to that father the hatred he had so unjustly shown him. Henriette was pale, but she had begun to learn how to school her heart.

CHAPTER X.

HENRIETTE learned to look on Edgar with calmness, as on her sister's future husband. He little guessed the deep feeling he had inspired. Not even Manette knew, or dreamt what she suffered. She understood her with her heart, which was all feeling, but the soul was not in that humble frame to comprehend that deep-seated grief, and the shame and self-abasement she internally felt.

Manette saw her smile, and said to herself, "ma chère fille may

do better than marry Monsieur Edgar after all."

The baron sat in his wife's dressing-room in earnest conversation. It was about a week after the foregoing events. "Marie," he said, holding an open letter in his hand, "I have forborne speaking to you of my plans, until I had some assurance of their success. I need not again tell you how hateful Paula's marriage is to me; I will not give up all hope of breaking off this childish fancy, without a struggle. Here is a letter from my sister in Paris, in reply to one of mine. She is delighted at the prospect of receiving the children for a few months, and you will accompany them."

"I, I!" almost screamed Madame de Rouvray in alarm—"Igo

to Paris! and mix in the world?"

"And would you allow your children to go alone?"

"There is your sister, surely she would be sufficient protection for them? Paul, I never can enter society—I should be lost there," and the poor nervous lady clasped her hands in anguish.

"And will you," he said sternly, "allow them to go without a mother's countenance? I do not ask you to enter into the world. Your health will be an all-sufficient plea for retirement. My sister

will do them ample justice in presenting them in society; but you,

Marie, must be on the spot."

"But—but if I am known to be there, there will be some one to be inquisitive about me. I cannot always remain secluded in my room. Even your sister will draw strange conclusions, and the children will suspect something. Oh! Paul, spare me this."

She took his hand—hers was trembling violently.

"Marie," he said, gently, "you make mountains of misery for yourself. What is there to suspect, still less to know? You exaggerate, and create a world of phantoms around you. My dearest Marie. my own wife, I would not ask a sacrifice that might pain you, but I am assured that your own imagination engenders the evils you conjure up. For your children's sakes, Marie, consent. I have told my sister your health will preclude the possibility of your entering society. She too gladly accepts the charge of chaperoning the girls, for she has so often impressed upon me the necessity of introducing them. Blind fool that I have been not to do it sooner, and thus, perhaps, have avoided this hateful marriage!"

He rose, and paced the room impatiently for several moments. Madame de Rouvray sat in deep thought, her eye fixed on the

ground, as if she read some fatal secret there.

"Marie," the baron said, at last, standing before her; "will you consent, for their sakes—for mine? You will be doing me no common favour by assisting me to break off this marriage.'

"Paul," she answered, starting, and looking up, "I never refused you any prayer; if it broke my heart, I would not do so

now."

He sat down beside her, and took her hands in his.

"That's my own Marie, ever the same, ever ready to meet my wishes. You see," he added, after a moment's pause, "I never should have given my consent, but for the solemn promise I made you when we married, never to control our children's choice-and I never will. Still, I hope, by gentle means, to break off this girlish fancy, engendered by solitude and early associations. Fool, fool that I have been, not to foresee this!"

"And when do we go?" she asked, her mind full of this un-

welcome journey.

"Why, soon; for the sooner they are parted the better. He, this Edgar Andriot, must shortly rejoin his regiment in Algerthere is hope there." And his proud lip smiled. "And at my sister's he will not be able to see Paula unrestrainedly, as he does here: she is a great stickler for ceremony, though good and kind. This match does not please her. So much may be quietly done. "And Henriette and Henri?" she asked.

"Oh! they go, of course. Would to heaven Henriette had chosen this Andriot, I should have cared little for that. The girl is all obstinacy and self-will."

"Do not think so harshly of her, Paul, for my sake;" and she

looked imploringly in his face.

He bit his lip, but did not reply. After awhile he said: "And

Henri, something must be done with him. I hope much from this journey; he may meet friends to lead his intractable nature into a right channel."

"And you, Paul, wont you come?" and she took his hand

timidly.

"I; no, I must remain here—that is," he added hastily, hearing her sigh, "for awhile; I have many improvements—alterations in the grounds to make, but I shall come often and see you."

"I shall miss Monsieur Bruton," she said, thoughtfully. "I

was so accustomed to him; he always spoke comfort to me.'

"You will not lack comforters at my sister's—though a woman of the world and fond of gaiety, she knows well how to make her pleasure subservient to her religion. I really think, Marie. you will be happier away from Bruton. He is a good man, but there is a cold rigidity about him, which chills the heart. A man may be all the most devout could desire, and yet not a grave ascetic, like Bruton; such men frequently make the heart revolt against religion by making its pursuit a path of briers."

Madame de Rouvray looked up surprised at this speech, and unconsciously uttered the keenest reproach which could have been

conveyed.

"Then why wish poor Henriette to marry him? Why feel surprised at her young warm heart turning against him?"

"Because—because," he replied, slightly colouring, "she did it

out of a spirit of opposition and disobedience."

Again the mother sighed. He rose.

"Then, Marie, now that all is arranged, I shall write to my sister and fix the day."

"Will it be soon?"

"Why, yes, why delay? the sooner the better." And he quitted the room. A deep heavy sigh fell on his ear, as the door closed.

The intelligence of the projected visit to Paris brought different sensations to all in the château. To Henriette it was one of indifference—what did she care for change? What change of scene could alter her fate, or restore her to hope again? She had grown older by years during the few last days.

Paula was delighted, yet she felt a regret at the hint dropped in her ear by her father, "not to encourage Edgar Andriot's visits at her aunt's—she would soon see him again unrestrainedly at the

château."

As he said this, he internally prayed that she might not. Henri was wild with the anticipation of happiness in Paris, that Eldorado of amusement, with Henriette there, and dear little Paula. Edgar too would come—his mother would be no restraint, and his father would seldom visit them. This last assurance exceeded all the others in the satisfaction it gave.

Edgar was in despair; he sought Henriette, and poured out all his fears and his troubles into her kind heart. And that noble girl left no argument unemployed to tranquillize and soothe him.

Already Edgar looked upon her as on one above humanity and its trials; she seemed too calm ever to be affected by sorrow. Alas! he little knew. She could soothe, and guide others along or out of the thorny paths of life—he dreamed not of the brambles over which she had trodden with bleeding feet!

Père Andriot had never been the same man since the night he had sought the baron, unable to keep in his breast for a moment the (to him) weighty and anxious secret of Edgar's love for Paula.

Well had he read the baron's heart. He saw that some motive he could not divine had induced Monsieur Rouvray to give his consent, but he saw too how, even while giving it, the proud lip curled with scorn. This was galling to the good cure, for he knew how much Edgar's real worth placed him above the mere accident of ancient blood; for his Edgar, even to that lowly humble priest. was an object of pride, and to see him despised for wanting an empty title, was wormwood even to him, but he took up his cross and forbore complaint. Mademoiselle Louise saw nothing of all She had been so accustomed to 'les enfans de Monsieur le Baron.' that she almost felt that her nephew, the handsome lieutenant, who had won his grade and décoration on the field of battle, was honouring them by the alliance. Poor Père Andriot would not undeceive her, yet he trembled, knowing the warmth of her temper, when, dressed in her Sunday attire, she went up to the château to embrace her little niece. However, all passed off quietly: Mademoiselle Louise did not see the baron's contracted lip and brow as she, the vigneron's daughter, kissed and blessed his child, and talked of the future greatness of her bon Edgar, of whom she was so proud: "he was certain to be a general,—who knew, perhaps a maréchal? and think of her position then?" And the poor good woman wrung Paula's hand, and again and again embraced her imaginary Madame la Maréchale.

At last Père Andriot drew her away, before the baron's pride, unable to restrain itself, could burst through every barrier, and

overwhelm her.

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CHAPTER XI.

The baron's sister, Madame la Comtesse de Cressy, was type of the haute noblesse of France; cold, dignified, and noble in appearance, as the Quartier du Luxembourg where she resided. With her, life had had but one aim—grandeur. A splendid marriage, a mighty stream leading onwards towards that ocean, position, which gives power and wealth. She knew nothing, nay, could not conceive anything of the lowly hearts bound up in each other in poverty, and eating that crust—contentment—until step by step they should rise to the top of the ladder. The ladder might break, and they never arrive at the summit at all. No, she commenced at the top. Young, handsome, and admired, she knew there was a sceptre to be wielded over the world by riches and position, and she waited till it was placed in her grasp.

When her father told her that the old and infirm Comte de

Cressy had proposed in due form for her hand, without even seeking an approving word from her lips, she accepted him, not as one sacrificing herself, not with resignation and obedience, but with joy! He was wealthy and great; so she married him, never asking her heart—for she had none—whether she might not have loved him better had he been young and handsome: to her it was perfectly indifferent. She scarcely asked or knew his Christian name. He was always, in speaking of or to him, Monsieur le Comte. She never desired children—what could their love or infant prattle be to her? She might have been thankful for an heir to a noble name had he been sent direct from heaven; but he would never have drawn his mother's milk; it was not selon les convenances; he would have been placed with a nurse.

When Monsieur de Cressy died, it was a great satisfaction to know that he had departed surrounded by all the splendour befitting his rank; and a magnificent mausoleum recorded his titles

and virtues.

And now she settled down contented. No taint had ever sullied her fame; pure and cold she stood erect—Madame la Comtesse de Cressy. To this woman were the warm, generous children of her

brother consigned.

As they stood before her, one scrutinizing glance sufficed; they were pur sang, but needed much cultivation, which she promised herself to bestow upon them. She received Madame de Rouvray with all kindness and sisterly love, giving her a finger. The children she kissed on the forehead. Henri, the scapegrace, was the first to receive a lecture; in the innocence of his heart he called her ma tante. Such words were obsolete in the Faubourg St. Germain. Madame, or Madame la Comtesse, was the proper term of appellation.

Henri smiled, nothing abashed. Already he began to hate his father's sister, and for no reason save that she was such. His father's undisguised tyranny and dislike awoke in his bold and dauntless

nature no other feeling but hatred.

Madame de Cressy was, like her brother, a Protestant, but all creeds found a welcome in her salon, provided those who professed them had sufficient wealth, position, or fame, to entitle them to that honour. She was very fond of "Lions," but not from eccentricity, or a desire for notoriety, still less to add to her reputation or consequence—nothing could do that. However the light from herself might reflect honour on others, none could be added to the halo around her, which shone out from the thousand leaves of her genealogical tree.

Henriette became her first care. By right of priority of birth, she came before Paula. Then again, there was more to fashion there. Henriette was, as she said, "quite English," melancholy, pale, and blonde. Paula had much more of the French girl in her dark complexion, raven hair, and hazel eyes; then her espiéglerie of character resembled that of a fair Parisienne, so she might wait

awhile.

The first step towards fashioning Henriette was to procure for her a thorough French maid.

"Manette," said the comtesse, "is, I daresay, a good, faithful, creature; but unfit, totally unfit for my niece's attendant; leave

her to Madame de Rouvray."

La comtesse did not see the same objection in calling her nieces "nieces," as being by them called "aunt." The first was a condescension on her part, the latter would have been an underbred familiarity on theirs.

Henriette submitted to all. Manette would be in the house; what could it signify to her who braided her hair, or dressed her? When Amélie, her new attendant, however, entered her room, she instinctively shrank from the expression of low cunning and deceit in the face of that woman of forty-five, all smiles and humility, flattery and persuasion.

"Oh! que mademoiselle est belle!" she exclaimed, when Henriette's toilette was completed. "Oh! la belle taille! la belle

chevelure!"

Her mistress turned coldly away from her, and her glass. If she were so beautiful, what cared she? there was no eye to look on her, that she sought for approval from.

There is a pardonable vanity and coquetry in us when we love and are beloved. We like to glow in beauty beneath the sun

shining upon us.

"Provinciale!" said Amélie, in contempt, as Henriette glided

from the room. "Praise is thrown away on such a girl."

With Paula, Amélie had a lighter task; she smiled complacently when she was admired; there was no wish, still less had she sufficient art, to conceal her thoughts of herself. She liked praise, and knew she deserved it, and when it was not offered, not unfrequently asked, "Amélie, suis-je belle aujourd hui?"

Madame de Rouvray mixed seldom, nay, scarcely ever, in

Madame de Rouvray mixed seldom, nay, scarcely ever, in society. Sometimes she was obliged by courtesy, to descend to the drawing-room; but no one looking at the little, quiet woman in the corner of an inner salon, would for a moment suspect her of

being the mother of those three handsome children.

Sometimes Henriette would creep to her mother's side, feeling

for her loneliness; but she was always driven away by-

"There, go, my Henriette; you will attract attention; I like sitting quietly here unnoticed. I like to see you gay and happy," (alas! she little knew her child's sadness,) "but don't come here;" and Henriette departed, wondering at her mother's strangeness of manner, which brought questions into her mind.

We must now speak of Henri.

When he first came, it was with a firm determination to make himself obnoxious to his aunt, out of spite to his father—he made it his hourly study. Henriette, the ever-watchful, saw this, and one day after a warm discussion between them, drew him away, and in her gentle manner counselled him.

"Henri," she said, "why do you take delight in annoying my aunt? She is very kind, and though she may have certain foibles, you should not make a point of exposing them to strangers; besides which, for your own sake, it is impolitic. She is well-disposed

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towards you now; should she become otherwise, there will be nothing left for you but to return to the château, and Monsieur Bruton.

"That I never will do," he cried, vehemently: "I resolved upon

that, before leaving."

"And what will you do, Henri? Consider, my own dear brother; do not allow your waywardness to influence you against the dictates of your heart and reason."

He paused-and in that pause his mind saw all she would point out; he was not quite selfish, either, in his change of conduct towards la comtesse. He came, hating her for the reason before stated. She had taken, for her, a deep interest in him; his appearance pleased her; he was worthy of becoming the future representative of the de Rouvrays; then again, his wild volatility was not without its charm in her eyes. She had no great affection for the profession his father wished him to follow, that is, she disliked his following it. She thought de Rouvray's heir should be free, that he would be better even poor and at liberty, than shackled by any profession. A strange feeling in one so avowedly a worshipper of wealth; but she had a stronger passion than the love of mammon-pride. The girls might sell themselves, or be sold, for wealth; with that sale the name would be obliterated. but the heir should never sully his by any profession, however it might enrich him.

Henri, we have said, commenced by hating his aunt. No saving

ever was truer than that "Love begets love.

He represented in her mind the de Rouvrays and de Cressys. He was the only person or thing that cold, worldly woman had ever loved. Not one sordid thought impelled his approaches towards her. Had she offered him millions, if his heart had not dictated the feeling, he would have kept aloof from her in cold disdain. It was strange that change in his feelings. He learned to look upon her almost as on a mother: while the girls were still at "la comtesse," or "madame," he actually was smiled upon with affection when he called her even tantine, that loving diminutive, and the small gemmed, aristocratic hand, not unfrequently passed coaxingly over the forest of light, wavy hair, as she gazed in pride on her dear nephew.

La comtesse never rose early, and seldom admitted any one into the privacy of her dressing-room; nevertheless, we find her one morning wrapped in a silken douillette, beside a chee ful wood-fire (coals, that dreadful English innovation, were unknown in her

hôtel) with Henriette for a companion.

After a long dissertation on the superiority of France in all

things over England, or indeed the world, she added:

"I never could understand your father's marriage with an Englishwoman—there, don't start, Henriette, I am not going to speak ill of your mother; but she is the type of her country, all coldness and indifference."

"My mother's health is delicate," said her niece, "but she has never been wanting in real affection:" and before her mind's eye

rose the memory of many a pleading look and word with her father.

"It is possible: but among all the handsome women whom he might have chosen, I cannot comprehend why he selected your mother. A foreigner, and so strangely retiring."

"Perhaps she was not always thus," argued the other. "I blame Monsieur Bruton's rigidity of manner and counsels for

much that seems chilling in my mother: he quite led her."

"Just like all your women, without energy; she required a governing hand. She was always so."

"My mother must have been very lovely," hazarded Henriette,

hoping to change this current of almost reproach.

"Why—yes, in the eyes of those who admire a doll. Yes, she certainly was pretty," she continued. "It was a strange marriage, quite devoid of all ceremony indispensable to one of his birth. Do you not know the history?"

"I never heard it alluded to. even."

"Imagine," the comtesse said, after a pause, "de Rouvray picking her up at Verdun. Her father was one of the détenus there." Henriette coloured at the phrase "picking up:" before she

could speak, her aunt continued:-

"Your father saw her at Verdun, and became deeply ena-moured of her. In vain he tried to procure the exchange of her father with prisoners in England. It would seem the old man had firmly resolved never to give his consent to his daughter's marriage whilst he continued a prisoner. To please him, de Rouvray tried all means, but in vain, to procure his release: I speak of some twenty years ago. At length peace was proclaimed; the détenus departed for their country-those who could-your grandfather was one, and, as it would appear, resolutely forbade all thoughts of an union between his daughter and my brother. They left, and Paul, your father, was disconsolate. Some time after, he went to England. I heard occasionally from him. I was just then married myself, and immersed in the duties of my position. (She did not say a word about those of a wife.) I nearly forgot all about my brother's love affair. About three years after my marriage, Monsieur le Comte de Cressy died, and nearly at the same time my brother returned, accompanied by your mother; Henri and yourself were twins of about two months old. I never was more amazed: for though Paul had once been to Paris during that period, it was so hurried a visit, and he appeared so occupied, that I had no time to question him-indeed, I had forgotten the whole affair.

"He seemed troubled, too, when he returned with his wife, and merely said, that her father's death had alone enabled him to make her his wife openly; that the marriage had only been performed in England in secret, and that he was most anxious to be re-married here. Naturally, I was desirous of having it celebrated with éclat—he, the representative of so noble a house. But no, he would have it private, and not even in Paris. He assigned as a reason—perhaps a just one—your existence, scandal, &c. So he

was married at Boulogne by an Englishman, who came over for that purpose."

"I can perfectly understand my mother's motives of delicacy,"

said Henriette.

"Oh it was not delicacy, but bizarrerie. All the English are fantasque."

"Remember," said Henriette, faintly smiling, "I am half one;

have mercy."

"Well, ma nièce, you do resemble them, and are so like your mother—not so cold, or nervous, but very like her—not at all the de Rouvray. I often told them so, until I saw how much it annoyed Paul, and your mother would weep when I said it, consequently I checked myself—but every one told him of it. So one day, in a fit of indignation, he carried you all off to his château, and there Paula was born some fourteen months afterwards."

"My poor mother," said Henriette, sadly; "I think she has had much trouble;" and her heart yearned more than ever towards

the "little, pale, sad Anglaise," as la comtesse called her.

"Trouble? yes, but then she only seemed to exist in that atmosphere. She was always an amphibious creature, half her time living in tears."

"Even in her youth, madame?"

"Oh, more so then than now—it appeared a necessity with her to cry. How Paul could ever have married her, I know not,—and he loved her passionately."

"I think my father does so still."

"Oh, I daresay! your crying women float themselves into men's hearts. I know I rejoiced when they left; they made me miserable."

Henriette looked on the blazing hearth, and pondered deeply. She hated to hear her mother spoken thus slightingly of. Woman like, she felt that some deep sorrow had crossed that parent's heart.

"But now," said her aunt, "tell me about this most extraordinary engagement existing between Paula and this Edgar Andriot. What a plebeian name! My brother has consented, it appears, though he has a complete distaste for the match. How is this?"

When her aunt commenced speaking, Henriette felt her cheeks burn at the thoughts those questions awakened; with difficulty

she replied :-

"I think there is everything in the marriage to ensure Paula's happiness. Edgar is all goodness, and has distinguished himself. And they love each other much."

"All that is nothing,—mere sentiment. What is he? Only the nephew of a village curé. A mere soldier of fortune—a nobody.

'Tis perfect insanity, and must never be."

"Never be?" echoed Henriette, raising her fine intellectual eyes in amazement. "But they are engaged—solemnly pledged to each other. How can such engagements of hearts and hands be broken?"

"Ma chère nièce, you know little of the usages of the world. Paula has fancied herself in love with the first person who spoke of love to her; here she will and must forget it. The only thing which amazes me is, how my brother could ever have permitted any intimacy with people of such a low station. The whole affair

is a perfect mystery."

"You do not know the persons you speak of, my dear——" (she was about to employ the familiar word "aunt," but substituted "madame;") "Edgar's uncle is an angel walking the earth. Edgar is not rich, but there is a mine of wealth in his heart and mind—her face kindled as she spoke—"and I feel assured that I judge my sister correctly when I say, nothing will make her break off her emgagement."

"Tut—tut—tut, ma nièce! How you warm with your subject! One would really imagine you were pleading your own cause!"

Henriette grew pale, fearing she had said too much.

"I am only speaking what I knew my sister would say," she replied meekly. "Edgar Andriot is only a dear brother and old

playfellow to me."

"There, child, go," said her aunt, emphatically. "I really can find no excuse for my brother's having brought you up with vulgar associates, as he has done! There, go; and send your maid, Amélie, to me; I wish to give her some directions about your dress. You do not, of course, forget that I receive this evening?"

"I really had forgotten," answered Henriette, rising.

"I shall never make anything of her," she said, mentally, as her niece closed the door. "Quite English! And yet I cannot but

like her. too."

Henriette paused an instant outside, then following the long corridor, turned to the left, and mounted a narrower staircase than the one leading to the comtesse's apartment. At the top she rapped gently at the door. A small thin voice said, "Entrez!" and she stood before her mother. These were the quiet, chosen rooms of Madame de Rouvray. That lady looked up from her volume of prayers, which was seldom out of her hand. "I thought it was Manette," she said, gently smiling.

"No, mother dear, it is your child—and welcome, I hope."

She seated herself, as she spoke, on the couch beside her, and fondly kissed her cheek.

"Welcome, my child, always welcome."

Henriette softly took the book from her mother, and, placing it on a small table beside her, took both her cold white hands in hers. She had always, she scarce knew why, felt for her mother; but oh! now, with what a depth of affection she looked on that poor outcast from her country—for such she felt her to be—in a (to her) cold and stranger land.

"And are you very comfortable, maman," (this was a word she seldom uttered; to both it had ever with her been the more distant "père" and "mère"): "are you very comfortable, maman chérie!

and quite reconciled to Paris?" She spoke cheerfully.

"Yes, Henriette," answered her mother, "I am reconciled to all things; I am happy here, when they let me remain." She looked round the room.

"Oh, but you must not always remain here; you grow pale and dull. Now you will oblige your Henriette, wont you, and come with her for a walk? a nice walk, this clear morning, in the gardens of the Luxembourg?"

"Oh, no, I'd rather not go out walking, my child—much rather not." And a look of terror stole over the face of the poor nervous creature. "I can take exercise in the garden of the hôtel; quite

exercise enough."

"Maman will oblige her child, will she not?" asked Henriette, intreatingly, as she slid down on the cushion at her mother's feet, and, kneeling before her, encircled her with her arms. "It is not twelve o'clock yet; no one will be about; and then, you know, la comtesse has a soirée this evening; you will not come down, and I fear I shall be unable to escape to you except for a moment, perhaps"—she spoke regretfully—"so, dear maman, let us spend this morning together. You will, will you not?"

And rising with a grace which so well became her, she dressed her mother. First her brodequins had to be laced, there were then the bonnet and shawl, and the gloves; and when it was all completed she stood surveying her work with almost childish delight. All was forgotten but pleasure, at that moment, and she smiled with content, until her mother was fain to smile too. As they stood thus the door opened and Manette entered: she stared

with surprise.

"Madame going out?"

"Yes, Manette, to oblige me, maman is accompanying me to the Luxembourg gardens, so there—I leave her in your care

until I return with my bonnet on."

And kissing her mother's cheek, she flew down the narrow stair along the corridor, and into her own room, throwing on her mantelet and bonnet with a total disregard for those stately convenances of la comtesse which should have made her summat Amélie to attend her. Outside the door of her room she met that person; then, only then, did she remember the comtesse's desire to see her maid.

"Amélie," she said, "Madame la comtesse wishes to see you directly." And without another word she ran down the passage.

Amélie looked after her. "What a girl," she said, contemptuously; "folle, like her mother; I shall never make anything of her!"

Certainly she never would—that nature was too noble for her

ministration.

It was a proud, happy day for Henriette. She led her mother forth, and they wandered in those quiet gardens, and under the nearly leafless trees, for upwards of two hours. Beneath her influence (for Henriette talked gaily, she felt so contented with herself and everything) her poor mother became almost talkative too, and smiled as she looked in her child's beaming face.

"Why cannot such pleasure last?" sighed Henriette, as they

mounted the narrow stair to her mother's room.

Manette was there to welcome them, and seldom do three less worldly spirits meet than those three! not one allowing a thought of jealousy, or envy, or any of our besetting sins amongst them. Henriette exacted a willingly given promise from her mother to renew their walk frequently; but as she left the room she sighed involuntarily, feeling that no premeditated pleasure could equal that improvised one.

"She's an angel!" enthusiastically cried Manette, as the door closed after her. "Oh, if Monsieur le baron had seen her to-day,

he must have loved her!"

Madame de Rouvray dropped into her seat and sighed heavily: all her contentment vanished. Thus, too often does a well-meant word lead to some passage in our world of thought, where all is bitterness.

As Henriette turned into the corridor she met Paula flying along—a wild excitement in her air: she clasped her sister's arm.

"He is here, here, Henriette," she cried.

The other trembled. She knew at once who was meant.

"Edgar?" she asked.

"Yes, mon Edgar; he came up, unable to remain any longer absent. I was so surprised and delighted. Come and see him." And she endeavoured to lead her down the staircase to the salons.

"No, not yet," said she, drawing back, "have—have you told

my aunt?"

"Oh, no, he is only just arrived; I will go; she'll be so pleased, I know, for she gives a soirée this evening, and will like him to be there."

Henriette knew otherwise, and dreading something being said

to grieve Paula, she detained her.
"Go to Edgar," she said; "I will tell my aunt, and join you

immediately.

"Thanks, dearest sister; I will go then, for we have so much to say to each other." And the joyous girl bounded down the stairs.

Her sister paused a moment to collect herself, and then tapped at her aunt's door. Amélie opened it—a smile on her face.

"Ah! c'est cette chère Mademoiselle de Rouvray," she said.

La comtesse looked cross. Amélie had been recounting the whole history of Henriette's strange flight, with her own comments.

"Such things may do in the country, but they are unbeseeming a demoiselle of your rank, here," added her aunt, after a long

previous tirade.

"I beg pardon, madame," answered she, with calm dignity, no more the child of the mother's room; "but you forget why I went out, and with whom-my mother.

"Your mother, your mother, and what protection is she? a

poor weak creature.

Henriette laid her hand on her aunt's arm. "You will forgive

me," she said, gently but faintly, "if I remind you that I, her daughter, cannot hear her thus slightingly spoken of; she is nervous from ill-health, but my own dear mother still. And I trust I may never have a weaker protection than that of her presence and love."

The comtesse stared; so did Amélie—this was a new language

to both.

"Yes, yes, of course," said the former, hurriedly. "But your manner, Amélie tells me, was flighty, undignified,—you dressed

yourself."

Henriette turned and looked at the woman. All her father's pride shone in her eye and air, as she answered, "Madame, you have an aunt's right to speak; but I never permit a servant to judge between me and my mother. I shall, with your permission, accompany her daily, as to-day." Amélie from that moment became her bitter enemy.

"Of course, if she desires it," replied her aunt. "But you

came for something, I presume?"

"Yes, madame; may I speak alone with you a moment?"

"Amélie, leave us," said la comtesse. Amélie glared on Henriette as she closed the door.

"I wish to tell you," she said, "that Edgar Andriot has

arrived."

"Arrived?" almost shricked the other, "when-where?"

"He is below-in the salon with Paula.

"Que Dieu me preserve!" uttered she between her set teeth, as she paced her room, "What bourgeois insolence! Uninvited—in my hôtel!"

"He is your niece's affianced husband," urged Henriette.

"Affianced! and am I la Comtesse de Cressy, to have my home invaded by a set of persons whom my lunatic brother chooses to accept?" she sprang to the bell; "he shall leave my house."

Henriette arrested her hand. "My dear madame," she said, imploringly, "pray, pray do not; it will wound him, and break

Paula's heart: poor little Paula-pray let him remain?"

But the comtesse was inexorable. "His insolence, to come

uninvited!"

"But only as a visitor," urged her niece; "and then, you know, Henri is much attached to him." The aunt paused,—Henriette saw her 'vantage ground, and did not cease until she gained permission for him to remain to dinner, and the soirée too. "Henri would like it, she knew he would." The sister could conscientiously say this, and that plea was all-sufficient.

When she descended, the messenger of joy, and met Edgar, no one could have read in her heart all she had schooled that heart

to conceal.

CHAPTER XII.

THE evening arrived; Henriette was dressed first, and dismissed Amélie to Paula's room. She ran up the little narrow stair to show herself to her mother, and bid her good night. Somehow, she grew more attached to her parent, since she had heard part of her history, and perhaps, too, her father's prolonged absence removed a certain restraint from her actions. Certain it is that even her mother felt it, and her sad eye brightened as she caught the sound of that light step on her narrow stair. Paula, too, came, but with no such good results; her quick, restless

childishness of manner made her mother nervous.

The "good night," said beneath Manette's ever-approving eye, like a beautiful spirit the girl glided down stairs to her room. Paula was there, and turned joyously as her sister entered. "Tiens!" she exclaimed in delight, "we are both dressed alike! Oh, I am so happy! for now they will all recognise us as sisters. I like them to see that Henriette belongs to me! No," she said, correcting herself, "that I belong to Henriette," and she walked round her. "They might not, you know; we are so unlike;" and in childish glee she turned round to the right and left, surveying her own exquisite figure. No feeling of vanity suggested the action; it was the fawn gazing at itself in the stream. And with her wild dark eyes, and dilating nostril, to nothing else could she be compared—all grace and lightness.

be compared—all grace and lightness.

"How lovely you look, Henriette," resumed Paula; "Edgarthought you looked sad and pale; he will not think so to-night.—

there, see;" and she drew her sister before the mirror.

They were a picture, certainly. Dressed in rich silk petticoats of the purest white, over which flowed simple robes of organdie; with not a gem, not a flower in their hair, which was dressed exactly alike, en vierge, with the thick fold, roll upon roll, behind. Nothing could exceed Paula's beauty; her eyes looked black as night from excitement, and flashing like lightning-clouds; her hair like a raven's wing in the sun; the ripe red lip open and smiling above the beautiful teeth. She was more—much more dazzling, than Henriette's paler and fairer beauty.

dazzling, than Henriette's paler and fairer beauty.

"Exactly alike, exactly," exclaimed Paula. "No, you have no bouquet." There the only dissimilarity existed; she had one in

her bosom.

"Edgar brought me these flowers," she added, removing them,

" we will divide them."

"No, no," cried her sister, in suppressed emotion, "not for the world—wear them, Paula; they were his gift." Paula looked astonished at her earnestness. "It might grieve him, your dividing them; nay, I will not." And she pushed back the little hand; she felt it would have agonized her to wear his flowers next her heart; we cannot always reason with our feelings.

"Perhaps he might feel grieved," said Paula, as she replaced

them. "They will know us for sisters without that. Allons!" And the two beautiful creatures glided, with a dignity which enchanted Madame de Cressy, into the already filled salons.

Near the door stood Henri and Edgar. Henriette seized her brother's arm, as Edgar drew Paula's under his own. La contesse had lectured the latter so severely upon the impropriety of a young girl's parading herself and her lover before the world, that Henriette placed herself in front of them, with her brother as a screen. As they advanced, she saw a contraction pass over her aunt's face—but what could be done? How tell them? impossible, so she walked on. Paula felt rather shy and nervous; it was the first reception la comtesse had given since their arrival; and as they passed through that crowd to where her aunt sat, she instinctively clung to Edgar's arm. The young officer wore the uniform of which he was so justly proud, and looked with beaming eyes on his beautiful fiancée, as murmurs of admiration met his ears.

Resolved, if possible, to break off the marriage (and to her, nothing seemed more easy) the comtesse felt deeply annoyed at her niece being thus seen on his arm; but then, it was not written on their brows; and then, she admitted how distingué Edgar looked; so when the four approaching, stood before her, she smiled, she felt really proud of her beautiful relatives. In a farther salon there was dancing—not the polka, and its dozen descendants; the wild toosin of that entrancing dance had not yet rung over Parisian society. The more stately quadrille, and lighter valse, were summoning the young beneath their banners; in that far salon where sat the comtesse, conversation alone reigned. In an inner room the elder pleasure-seekers were beguiling the hours with whist and écarté.

Leaning over la comtesse's fauteuil, was a young man, not very tall, yet above the middle height; fair and handsome, blue-eyed, and pale, almost sickly in appearance.

Everything in his air—the ease, the dress, and quiet grace,

bespoke the well-bred man, and the Englishman.

He almost started as Henriette and her brother stood before him; he did not see Paula. He had seen much beauty in his short life; had travelled much; (but he could not be more than two and-twenty at most,) yet nothing fairer or so fair as that girl had he ever looked upon. As he gazed in deep admiration, Paula met his eye. He paused an instant, and then turned once more to Henriette's face, and rivetted his looks upon her.

"Milord Vesey," said la comtesse, "pray allow me to present you my nieces, Mademoiselle de Rouvray, and her sister Paula."

He bowed low.

"And mon neveu, Henri, their brother."

Again he bowed. Edgar was not presented.

"Wont you introduce Edgar?" whispered Paula with childish simplicity. La comtesse was deaf to the request; so Paula turned to him, and spoke no more. She could not imagine his being thus excluded from the family.

"Does Mademoiselle de Rouvray dance?" asked Lord Vesey.

and will she allow me the pleasure of the next quadrille?"

Henriette bowed an assent. He offered his arm. It was not quite etiquette to draw her from her aunt's protection until the dance commenced, and a valse was resounding in the apartment: but Lord Vesev was English, a man of rank and fortune, so la comtesse overlooked it.

"Et toi, Paula?" whispered Edgar to his fair companion. unheard by her aunt, who was conversing with another arrival.

Paula only pressed his arm, and they followed in the wake of the other two. Henri lounged off alone.

To reach the salle de danse they had to traverse the salon where

visitors were playing cards.

They stood beside a table of écarté.

"There is a study for a painter, Mademoiselle de Rouvray,"

said Lord Vesey. "Look at those two opponents."

She did so. One was a tall, a very tall, thin man, whose every feature was as sharp as though nature had held a grindstone in her hand when creating him. He had long rigid fingers, which, spider like, clasped the cards, as we see that insect draw up its legs in terror. The small eye, black as a bead, never quitted or seemed to quit his opponent's face: he did not appear even to look at his own cards, but played them as though his fingers had eyes to see them:—this man was merely the subsidiary part of a picture—the prominent picture was his antagonist. On him Henriette's eyes instinctively fixed. Was it presentiment—was it repulsion which made her shudder? Herself unseen-for they stood at a short distance—she gazed on them.

He was a man of at least sixty. Sallow is a word that would faintly convey a description of his complexion; he was not thin, but diminutive to an extraordinary degree in figure, with a small. deep, restless eye, closely set, over a high Roman nose, and beetle brows of a dark, grisly hue-much darker than his hair-which was nearly white. A coarse, sensual mouth completed the picture, all except the low, narrow forehead. There was every vice and not one redeeming trait in that face. In his dress he was scrupulously neat: it was black, all black, excepting the snowy shirt and large wristbands, nearly touching the knuckles of his small but ill-formed hand, the fingers of which were bent, and the nails partially hooked: it was like the claw of a bird of prey.

"What do you think of my picture?" asked Vesey.

"Who is that man?" she replied; herself asking a question. "A man sought everywhere for his general information, keen perception, and power of conversation when he deigns to talkwhich is not often: and for that idol in this world,—wealth."
"But his name?" she said.

"General de la Valerie," he replied,—"he seems to interest you?" "Let us go," she answered, shuddering. "What a fearful countenance! he cannot be a good man."

"You are an enthusiast, and a disciple of Lavater, I perceive,

and he looked admiringly on her.

"No, I only read the book Nature has laid before us—the countenance: he cannot be a good man."

"Some think so, for he is wealthy. Men are like plate-glass mirrors, embellished by gilding, don't you think so?" he said.

"No," she answered decisively, "give me the plain one, though

in a wooden frame, in which you read the heart.'

Before he could reply, General de la Valerie looked up; his eye met hers. She was fascinated by that extraordinary glance. He quietly laid his hands on the table with the cards he was about to deal, and gave one long, deep, soul-searching gaze.

"Come, Mademoiselle de Rouvray," said her companion, "the valse has ceased; let us forget the awful general in the dance,—you are quite startled," and he led her into the next salon. Waiting for them, they found Paula and Edgar, who danced vis-à-vis in the quadrille.

"Do you valse?" asked Vesey of Henriette, in a pause in the

dance. She replied in the affirmative.

"I suppose," he said, "it would be contrary to every rule of

etiquette, to solicit the favour of the next with you?"

She hesitated, in doubt whether it was wrong or right to acquiesce; but her aunt had placed so many dreadful stumbling-blocks to enjoyment in her path, in the form of convenances, that she feared transgressing against some given rule. Vesey saw her hesitation. "I see," he said, "I must not offend against the starched dame Etiquette, who walks in most of these salons of the Faubourg, more especially chez Madame la comtesse. She is one of the old school, and observes all its laws rigorously. May I hope for the next après, if I now place you safely under Madame's wing?"

"I shall be very happy," replied she; his quiet, gentlemanly

unaffected manners pleased her much.

"Hore we are, near your aunt," he said. "For awhile I must relinquish you. Pray don't forget the valse—don't faint, Mademoiselle de Rouvray, there's your bête noire talking to la comtesse."

Henriette looked forward as he spoke, and with a feeling of increased repugnance, beheld General de la Valerie conversing with

her aunt.

"Shall we return to the other salon?" asked Vesey, pausing in

the middle of the room.

"No," answered she. "My aunt has seen me, I cannot retire. It is strange, perhaps wrong, Lord Vesey, but I have taken a most unaccountable antipathy to that man: it is beyond my reason to control the feeling."

They paused a moment, and then unwillingly advanced towards

the group.

La comtesse looked radiant—it was clear the evening had been an agreeable one to her. Her salons were crowded with the élite of French society; and then a little nervousness, which she had at first felt about the manner her relatives might conduct themselves, was completely set at rest. Nothing could be more perfect; they were the admiration of all. Even Edgar, her bête noire, had been

spoken of. He was known by name to some few general officers there for deeds done in Algeria, of which his décoration spoke. The comtesse took especial care, nevertheless, to remove any idea of his real position with Paula, speaking of him as a playfellow of Henri's, and thus accounting for the intimacy existing between the families. She had strictly cautioned Paula against any unseemly love-making before the world; and the two saw themselves obliged by these heavy usages du monde to separate the greater part of the evening. Poor girl! her step was far less buoyant when another whirled her in the giddy valse: and his comfort and resource consisted in seeking Henriette and talk, talk, talk—and all about Paula!

Poor Henriette!

Her aunt smiled blandly upon her as Henriette advanced leaning on Lord Vesey's arm. She had been the belle of the night: her blonde beauty, so uncommon, pleased the French more than Paula's. She looked more like one of themselves, but then, even Lord Vesey was an Englishman. He, too, evidently was struck by the elder sister's grace. Altogether her aunt never had liked her half so much as that evening. She felt that even her consequence gained fresh lustre by the presence of those young beauties, as heraldic arms require supporters—though they little resembled lions rampant!

Henri stood near his aunt. His was a head which always looked wild; we do not mean careless or ill-kept literally—but wild. He had a habit of throwing back the hair off his high, polished brow, which, added to the expression of his dauntless eyes, made him

seem—not uncultured—but as a hawk without its jesses.

Henriette could not conquer her feeling of aversion, and sighed as she beheld him in converse with the dreaded general. Judging by that unerring page, the countenance, he was the last person she could wish as an acquaintance (his age forbade the idea of companionship), for the rash impetuous Henri. She little knew, when she thought companionship impossible, the power, the charm, that man, when he willed it, could exert over the young.

"Ma nièce," said her aunt, smiling, "here is a gentleman desirous of being presented to you. Monsieur le Général de Valerie.

this is my niece, Mademoiselle de Rouvray."

He bowed gracefully and low, she with constrained dignity.

"We must all feel proud," he said, in a low, musical voice, but bland, far too bland for a man, "in welcoming among us so

charming a person as Mademoiselle de Rouvray.

Henriette almost turned, without a recognition, the compliment. He said no more. She seated herself near her aunt. Under her eye Lord Vesey durst still remain beside her. Paula too was there, and he conversed so agreeably to both, that the girls were charmed. There was no flattery; no compliments were uttered or implied. He seemed as a friend they had long known.

Poor Edgar stood aloot. He felt madame did not quite like him, though he could not divine the cause. What a blessing sometimes

is ignorance. How many a pang it spares us!

He was not alone in that crowd. More than one knew his name. Fame flies fast, and he, the poor curé's nephew, saw himself sought by many, for the name he had ennobled, but which had

heretofore been respected for his father's sake.

We fear it is a sad fact, that generally speaking, military glory, except with a lucky few, is much more appreciated in France than at home—for there money cannot make the soldier. He must rise, even, it may be, from dust, till he becomes by his merit and bravery alone, a Ney or a Soult. Men are not chosen there for their riches—there is no standard but that of merit to measure them by. Little and great, all rush on to glory. It may be that their regiments are not so dazzling to the eye, but large and noble hearts beat in little bodies, and small men have colossal ideas—witness l'Empereur; and many a recruit of noble birth and education, trips it along in those marvellously queer grey coats, and white gaiters, carrying a string of cans in his hand, his comrades' dinners on guard; and he does it as gaily, singing or whistling, as though he were carrying a perfumed glove or bouquet over a velvet carpet, to the foot of some high-born dame:—and all for a chance of Glory!

Pardon, reader, this digression: it was but to show that pauvre Edgar Andriot, with those who could appreciate his merits, was somebody. Henriette raised her eyes on an exclamation and question of Vesey's addressed to her, of "a good tableau of age and youth. Monsieur de Rouvray is your twin brother, is he

Note. She looked. Henri and the general were moving away in the

CHAPTER XIII.

It was the morning after the soirée, and the children of Madame de Rouvray sat with her in the breakfast salle of that large hôtel, at the early hour of eleven. She was listening, almost with interest, to their various impressions of the previous night; it was only when Lord Vesey's name was mentioned that her usual nervousness returned.

"An Englishman," she said; "did you hear from what part of

England? I do not remember the title."

crowd, arm in arm!

"I really do not know," answered Henriette, "but he is a very agreeable young man; you will probably have an opportunity of judging for yourself, maman. I think he is a frequent visitor here."

"I trust not," she exclaimed, hastily; then correcting herself, added: "That is, I hope I may not meet him. It is unlikely, too, I remain so much in my own apartments. I do not, as you know, like the society of strangers."

"But you would be pleased with him," said Paula; "he is quite

unaffected, and really seemed like one of ourselves; did he not. Henriette ?"

"Yes," she replied, "I felt quite at home and at ease with him.

He is clever too.

"Talking of clever, agreeable men," said Henri, "I never met one so much so as that old general; he knows every one, and is so caustic and witty."

"I don't like him," exclaimed both girls at once.

"That's just like you girls," replied Henri; "because he's old

and ugly, I suppose?"

"Oh. no!" answered Henriette; "and I'm sure Paula shares my feeling. We both liked-delighted in, I should say-the society of dear Père Andriot; he was not young, but then he was all goodness.'

"And why shouldn't the general be so too?" he asked.

petalantly.

"Because his countenance could not be so dark as it is, if the

mind were what it should be."

"Oh, you're both a couple of romantic girls. I only know this, I shall cultivate the acquaintance; he has sought mine, and I like

him."

"We should not always disregard first impressions and anti-pathies," hazarded his mother; "the face very generally is the page on which Nature, when she creates, writes her thoughts: if we read impartially, we are seldom quite wrong." And she looked down in thought, as though some old memory came over her.

"I know maman would not like him," said Paula; "Edgar did

not." Poor child! he was her guiding star.
"Oh, Edgar, Edgar," muttered Henri, impatiently; "what can he know? A boy like myself in the world. Of course he would say he disliked him, because you did."

"Do not speak slightingly of him," said Paula, deprecatingly,

"I am sure he loves you!"

"I daresay he does, and I like him; but he is incapable of

judging. What experience has he?"

"That of the heart, Henri, "urged his other sister, kindly. "Donot despise that! And what more experience have you as to a. a correct reading of human nature than Edgar has?"

"Oh, how I dislike girls talking of what they do not understand," he cried, rising impetuously from table. He was: evidently not in the most amiable mood. The reason soon ap-

"Can you conceive," he added, after a pause, during which he had been looking out of the window vacantly, "any one so unreasonable as my father? He expects the same allowance to suffice for me here which I received at des Ormes?"

"Have you heard from your father?" asked Madame de

Rouvray.

"Yes, this morning, and a pretty letter it is! All lectures and

threats, because I wrote to expostulate with him on his meanness."

"Your father is not rich," said his mother, "and has many expenses, especially now, with the alterations he is making at the

château.

"Why does he make them? I shall never live there when he dies; and he has laid out nothing on the old place so many years; why do so now? I hate it."

"My dear brother," said Henriette, rising and taking his arm, "do not speak thus of your father; it is wrong, and grieves

maman."

"And very unkind to speak of Edgar as you do," chimed in Paula.

"Oh! hang Edgar!"

"There," he cried, impatiently releasing his arm from his sister's hand; "let me go. I promised the general to call this morning early; he is going to show me more of Paris than I have yet seen."

"Don't go; pray don't go!" cried Henriette earnestly, an unexplained fear creeping over her; "don't go with him!"
"Go with Edgar," said Paula, "he said he should come for you

to-day."

"What does he know of Paris?" he contemptuously replied, "we should be a couple of fools together, de notre village. Do not tease me, Henriette, I will go. Tell my aunt," he added, as he was leaving the room, "that I shall return before four to take her out, as I promised." And without another word he left the apartment.

"I wish your father were here," sighed his mother.

"I wish we had never quitted des Ormes," said Henriette, thoughtfully.

"And so do I." added her sister; "we were so very happy

there."

A silence fell upon all: the world without was beginning its conflict with the world within, and teaching its own sad lesson of experience. The pause was interrupted by a gentle tap at the door, and Amélie's unsmiling face, but ever-smiling lip, presented itself. "Madame la comtesse," she said, "would like to see the young ladies, when they have breakfasted, chez elle." And her

message delivered, cat-like, she glided away.
"What does my father say?" asked Henriette. "Is he coming

800m ?"

"No, not for some time, I think," answered Madame; "he is

much engaged."

Another silence, only broken by their mother rising to go to her own apartment, whither the two girls accompanied her, and

then descended to the dressing-room of their aunt.

There sat the comtesse, exactly as we have before seen her, enveloped in a rich douillette in a large fauteuil. On a small table beside her was a cup of half-sipped chocolate. Even at that early hour of the morning she would not be seen by her young relatives as Nature had made or left her, though that would have been infi-

nitely preferable to the fictitious bloom on her cheek, which added to rather than detracted from her years, which were not so many but that she might have still been pleasing, had she not sought the adventitious aid of art. The eyebrows trained to a mere thread, and painted—rouge and pearl-powder! She was a

Yet she was an extraordinary woman. With all the affection she possessed for Henri, she had never once inquired into his pecuniary resources, either never thinking of the matter, or else imagining that as his only son, her brother amply supplied him. Henri was not a person ever to ask, or even to hint his gené to her. As regarded his sisters, her modiste supplied everything necessary for their equipment: their own allowance was more than sufficient for their wants. Having premised thus much, we will enter the dressing-room with them.

La comtesse received them both kindly, but on Henriette's brow she imprinted a kiss. Henriette had risen far above her sister in their aunt's mind, from the admiration she had excited. For her, disengaged and beautiful, she foresaw a future of splendour in a mariage de convenance. How blunt are the tools in our hands, sometimes, with which we purpose shaping our ends!

"Mes chères nièces," she began, when they were seated, "I was much pleased with both of you last evening; you, especially, Henriette; you have indeed commenced as my most sanguine wishes might have dictated; in one soirée—your first—to have attracted two such eligible persons, as Lord Vesey, and le Général de la Valerie!"

"I?" exclaimed Henriette, startled. "Surely, the generalshe paused a moment, "the general said only half a dozen unmeaning words to me!

Her aunt patted her cheek, smiling.

"Enfant?" she said; "that innocent look exactly suits your style of beauty. I know the general, and never yet heard him speak to any young person admiringly before, much less solicit an introduction to her. He's immensely rich."

"But," said Paula, laughing gaily, "Henriette never could marry that old man? Why, he's old enough to be her grand-

father!"

"Mademoiselle," replied la comtesse, with the look of a glace au citron, "may I request you to abstain from such unbecoming remarks? If you have sought to disgrace your family by an ignoble connexion, allow others, with better taste and feeling, to remember their position and duty to society."

Paula looked down for an instant and coloured; but it was not the blush of shame. Raising her eyes to her aunt's face, she

"Do you speak of Edgar, madame? Why, he is distinguished by all. Last night several officers of rank inquired his name, and then sought introductions to him. He is an honour to any family!" and her face lighted up with pride and indignation, while her bosom swelled with emotion. r 2

"That may be your idea," said la comtesse, coldly; "but your marriage with him, which my insane brother consented to, will be an everlasting blot on our escutcheon-should it take place."

"Edgar Andriot would ennoble any woman: I am proud of him; proud of his fame, of himself-I would rather marry him with only his pay to subsist upon, than any other man with millions!" And Paula's over-excited feelings found vent in tears. Henriette threw her arms round her, and pillowing her head on her bosom, soothed her as she would a child.

"I really detest scenes," cried la comtesse, impatiently pushing back her fauteuil, "and you, Henriette, encouraging them! I am

surprised, disappointed in you!"

"Oh, madame!" replied Henriette, both her hands round her sister's throbbing brow, "poor little Paula is greatly attached to

Edgar; and he is so good, so very good."
"I daresay, I daresay—but ce bon bourgeois, why did he not remain in his own circle? we are no longer sous l'empire, when, if a man killed half-a-dozen of his fellows, and sprang up like a mushroom in a night, to be a general, he was entitled to aspire to the hand of the noblest and the best. I daresay, I repeat, that he may be a very good, courageous young man: mere courage is brute force, not the effect of bon sang."

"But," sobbed Paula, "papa has consented to our marriage, and papa would not make me unhappy; I should break my heart

if I were parted from Edgar."

"Silly child," said her aunt, more soothingly. She saw she had startled her, and her aim was to break off the match quietly. "There, don't cry," and she took her hand. "I spoke hastily, but you provoked what I said by interrupting me when I was advising your sister for her future good. Pray do not do so again. There. embrasse-moi!" she held out her painted cheek, and the fresh young lip pressed it, all forgiveness, even though the heart sobbed still. Henriette drew her again to her bosom, and fondly kissed her, seeking tenderly to still the sighs and sobs which at intervals burst forth. She lay there, her sister's arms around

her, her soft eyes, all love, dwelling on her face.

The comtesse resumed: "You must be fully aware, Henriette, that your fortune will be very small; your father is not rich, and until his death—he is still young,"—she would not for the world have thought him otherwise, as their ages were nearly the same-"you have little to expect—for what is the sum left by your marraine? Nothing: a mere thousand! just enough to fit out a trousseau becoming your position and rank. You must then

make a mariage de convenance."

"But surely not with such a man as the general?" exclaimed enriette. "I never wish to marry." A sigh almost escaped her, but she choked it down. "And I never could be happy with him, I am sure!"

"And why not, pray?"

"Because I felt from the first an antipathy to him; not for his age.—I love and admire the aged and venerable.—but to the man himself. I cannot help it: it may be wrong, but I took an instantaneous dislike."

Paula pressed her hand.

"Mere enfantillage!" answered madame. "But I only named him as a man I should approve of. He may never propose.'

"Heaven send he may not!" involuntarily exclaimed Henriette. Her aunt affected not to hear her, and resumed, "But should he, no girl in her senses would refuse such an offer. A man of the highest rank,—not a général de l'empire—noble, and immensely rich."

"But you do not speak of his character; his temper, mind, or

habits.'

"Tut, tut, child!" she cried, interrupting the catalogue of virtues indispensable to a husband in her niece's eyes. "What have these to do with marriage? When I married Monsieur de Cressy I was told to accept him, and I did. We passed three years of unalloyed happiness. We seldom met: his age prevented him from entering much society; I lived in it. He had his apartments, I mine, and a more considerate man never existed. I do not remember, during those three years, his ever entering my salon unannounced. Ah! ma nièce, if you could meet such another!" And she relieved her overcharged feelings of regret for his loss in a deep sigh. "It makes me sad," she continued: "there are few left like him; the mould is broken, and few such marriages now take place. Young ladies, most improperly, are permitted to have a voice in the matter, as if their judgment could equal that of others double their age!"

Paula pressed her sister's arm and looked up in her face with a roguish, smiling expression, without removing her head from Henriette's bosom. She was still a very child—tears one moment, laughter the next. Fortunately the comtesse was so absorbed in her reminiscences that she did not catch her niece's glance.

"But why must Henriette marry an old man?" asked the in-

corrigible Paula, looking up.

Her aunt would not vouchsafe a reply, but continued: "There is Lord Vesey, too; he is young and well-looking, un peu Anglais, but much sought after; nothing could be more marked than his attention. But there, I'll say no more now. Go! I have told you those I approve of;"—a glance at Paula—"go, and let me see you in the salon at four. I expect some persons to whom I wish to present you: apropos—where's Henri?"
"Gone," answered Henriette, hesitatingly, "to call upon

Général de la Valerie, I believe.'

"Just what I expected of him. Ce cher Henri! he has none of those absurd ideas about age and antipathies; he is an honour to the de Rouvrays;" and she drew herself up.

"He bade me say he should return by four, to accompany you

somewhere," said Henriette.

"Always attentive, always good! but I shall not go out to-day. Ce cher Henri!"

And leaving her to her cogitations, the girls escaped to Henriette's room.

When they arrived there, Paula sat like a child on her sister's lap; and, kissing her fondly, said: "No, ma petite saur shall not marry any of their old generals; she shall have a handsome young lover, like my Edgar, one worthy of her; and we'll be married the same day, and dressed exactly alike; and, with our long veils down, they wont know us apart, for I shall grow taller by then. And how funny if the bridegrooms mistook us, and led us to the altar before discovering their mistake! I should laugh so, Henriette, when I put up a corner of my veil, and peeped at Edgar; and the almost child laughed in girlish glee at her own fancy.

"I really never wish to marry, Paula-really!"

"What, you not marry? Fi donc, Henriette. What do you say to my aunt's second lover, Lord Vesey? I liked him very much, and he never took his eyes off your face."

"I don't think, Paula-indeed, I'm sure-I never should be in

love with him."

"Then Edgar shall bring you some bon camarade, like himself. I'd rather that, too; but I don't think he will soon meet his equal;" and her eyes sparkled with loving vivacity.

"Does he remain here long?" asked Henriette, in a low tone.

"No," answered the other, sadly; "he must join his regiment in Alger in about two months, and it will take him nearly a fort-

night to accomplish the journey."

"Well but, my own Paula, you will correspond; and next year his regiment returns. Besides, we shall soon, I hope, leave Paris, and see the green woods and fields again, and notre Père Andriot. Oh! I long so much to see him, and his good sister. I do not like Paris! All seems to me unnatural—a striving after effect, and nothing more."

"I like Paris, Henriette," answered the other; that is, when

Edgar is here. I like dancing, and operas, theatres—all."

"Heaven grant us contentment, whatever our fate, Panla. We must leave that for time to work out. Come, put on your things, and let us go out with maman. I know it will please her."

"Edgar is coming," whispered Paula, "but do not tell any one. Ma tante would mount the pedestal of her convenances if she knew it, and neither herself nor maman there, au salon, to-chaperon. I daresay some one will tell her, après; but I do not care then; I shall have seen him."

Her sister had not the heart to beg that it might be otherwise done. "I think," she said, however, "you should consider maman a little more. Edgar might have met us in the Luxembourg."

"I did not think of that; it is too late now; I will be a good girl—a good and dear one, like yourself, Henriette, and go out more with maman when Edgar's gone."

"I fear my aunt will be very cross with you when she knows of

his coming here, Paula."

"I know she will, and I can guess who will tell her—Amélie. I hate that woman, Henriette, she is always listening and flattering. Be on your guard with her: I am."

And again kissing her sister, she quitted the room to watch for

Edgar.

CHAPTER XIV.

HENRIETER found her mother dressed and awaiting her. That poor lone heart had kindled and warmed so much towards her affectionate child, that she looked for the moment of their being alone together, free from the restraint of society, as a child does for a cessation of its task. Verily, a noble nature is the noblest creation of Heaven. Such a nature was Henriette's. With her her mother talked and reasoned: in her company she did not seem like the same being; the depths of sorrow in that soul her child never attempted to fathom, but tried to soothe without knowing where the grief was hidden.

After a long and cheering walk, they returned just in time for Henriette to dress, and receive her aunt's visitors in the salon. Madame de Rouvray would not descend. Manette was in her mother's room when they returned; she evidently wished to speak alone to Henriette, but scarcely knew how to accomplish it.

In desperation at last, seeing her going, she followed, and stopping her on the narrow stair, she said, "ma bonne petite fille, I want to tell you something—that is, I wish you to see Made-

moiselle Paula, and put her on her guard." "On her guard, Manette? against whom?"

"Why, why, there," she said, after a moment's hesitation; "I know you wont suspect me of jealousy when I say I cannot bear Madame Amélie. She's false, and trying to make mischief against both of you, to gain the good-will and confidence of Madame la comtesse.

"I do not like or trust her myself, Manette; but what has she

"Why, you see, chère enfant, I was just going into madame's room," she pointed to the one they had quitted, "when I heard heard whispering to your aunt in the lobby. Such a creature as that likes no confidants, so she would not speak before Fanchette, la comtesse's own maid, but waited till madame came from her room to descend to the salon; and fearful even then of being overheard, they came near here. I know it was wrong to listen, but—there, allez—mademoiselle, I leave all very nice feelings to you and Mademoiselle Paula. I felt I should be perhaps doing you a service, so I listened; and what do you think I heard?"

"I cannot guess, Manette."

"Why the wicked creature was telling madame all about Monsieur Edgar coming this morning to see la chère petite, as if it were not quite natural; and of your going out and leaving them alone, you and madame, là-haut. And then there were such 'Oh Ciels! and 'quelle manque de convenance! and 'la réputation de ma nièce ! as if that ran any risk, payvre innocente !"

"I suspected she would tell," said Henriette: "What can I

do P"

"Only put la pauvre petite on her guard, for she will be nicely questioned and scolded.

"Poor dear Paula: I'm sure there was no harm in her seeing

"Harm? no: 'tis only such women as that Madame Amélie who make harm of everything, because they understand nothing good. I'm sure Madame la comtesse herself, would have been obliged to her to have left her eyes shut. Now, she must speak."

"I'll go to Paula and tell her."

"Yes, mon enfant, do. I hate their fine ways here," continued the good woman. "At the château, mademoiselle could walk and talk and do as she pleased; but here, she must always have some one stuck between them. I never had a sweetheart myself, but I know if I had, I should not have liked a third person always at hand! and what is virtue worth, if you must constantly keep it under lock and key? A girl should be taught its beauty and value: how can she know how best to watch the treasure she has never been shown the joy of preserving, or sorrow of losing?"

"Why did you not speak of this before maman? She might have taken the blame off Paula: I know she would grieve if she knew that she was thus teased." Manette regarded her with a

peculiar look, and then dropping her eyes, said:

"I thought it best not to tell madame. I could not have spoken so freely before her. There, mon enfant, go, and do not speak of this to la chère maman, it will only fret her." She did not give utterance to all her thoughts. Kissing her child's forehead, she betook herself to Madame de Rouvray's room, and Henriette descended to her sister's.

Paula was not there; she had already entered the salon. Thither her sister followed her. Glancing round the room, it was a relief to her, not to see the offending Edgar there; Paula, however, was stooping over her embroidery frame. There was one antiquated dame talking to the comtesse, who merely said,

"Marquise, ma nièce, Mademoiselle de Rouvray."

Henriette curtseyed—the old lady looked at her through her lorgnon, and uttered, with an approving shake of the feathered head, "Pas mal! pas mal!" and continued her interrupted conversation with la comtesse.

Henriette sat down near Paula's chair, and, in a low tone, told

her what she had just heard.

"I am amazed," she answered. "My aunt has said nothing. But, then, just as I entered, la marquise came. I knew cette Amélie would tell. Why must we have that Gorgon to dress us?"

"How?" said la marquise, in reply to something la comtesse had said. "You have not been lately—since his return—to hear the abbé preach? Oh shame! He is a thousand times better than before he went to Africa."

"I certainly must hear him again; he enchanted me then," she

"Oh he is divine!" cried the other. "And such a model of

beauty. Think, only think, the saint he is! A man of his fortune, rank, and personal appearance, choosing the church!"

"My dear marquise," answered the comtesse, slowly, "there may be some personal vanity in that. As a layman, he would have been one in a crowd; here, as the pet abbé of St. R — and all Paris, he is the one, the observed, worshipped, and sought after. by every grand dame!"

"You wrong him," replied the other, warmly. "He is rarely seen in society; most difficult to be approached, except by the poor. But of course you cannot feel our enthusiasm, being a

Protestant."

"Oh, pardon me, marquise! I am no bigot to my religion; and, to prove it, I will go and hear your abbé. When does he preach?"

"Sunday morning, at high mass."

"Cela va sans dire. Then I shall be there."

Here the marquise rose: la comtesse rang a hand-bell, and the servant appeared from the antechamber.
"La voiture de Madame la marquise."

And in dignified state the lady sailed away. When she left there was a moment's silence.

"Now," whispered Paula, smiling mischievously. La comtesse

again rang her hand-bell.

The servant re-appeared. "Bastien," she said, "remember whenever Monsieur Edgar Andriot calls in the morning early, unless I give you orders to the contrary, always say, 'the ladies are not visible.' Remember these are commands I expect obeyed."

She drew herself up with cold dignity. The man bowed and

withdrew.

"You force me to this unpleasant line of conduct," she said, looking at Paula, "by your secret meetings with ce Monsieur Andriot."

"I was not aware," answered Paula, colouring indignantly, "that what our father and mother countenance at des Ormes would be a heavy crime here. Secrecy there was none—I scorn it." She had never before spoken with so much womanly spirit.

Henriette looked amazed.

"Mademoiselle," said her aunt, frigidly, "that which was allowable at a half-savage retreat, such as your father chose to make his château, cannot be permitted in l'Hôtel de Cressy. I hope you quite understand the difference."

"It is too perceptible," answered Paula, coldly.

Her aunt felt a sarcasm was intended, but before she could reply, Bastien drew back the heavy velvet curtains before the portières and admitted Henri, and at his heels, like a lurcher, crept the general.

"Ah, te voilà mon neveu," exclaimed la comtesse, relieved from what she detested—a scene. Good day, General. So you have

been kindly taking charge of my wild boy here?"

The general gallantly kissed her hand: then turning round, saluted the sisters, who sat aloof.

"What are you both out there for?" asked Henri, throwing

back his hair. "Are you en pénitence?"

"Come, mes nièces," said la comtesse, "leave that broderie and

draw near the fire."

The girls rose: the general placed a chair near his own for Henriette. Without rudeness she could not have avoided taking it. He inquired in his bland voice after both their healths, and then the conversation became general.

"And where have you been, mon neveu?" asked the comtesse.

"Oh, everywhere," he replied. "First we went to the royal stables: there was a *jument*, Henriette, I should have liked for you."

"Does mademoiselle ride?" asked the general.

"Yes, at des Ormes," she replied, coldly.
"And why not here? I have an exquisite lady's horse; permit me to offer you the use of it. What says Madame la comtesse may I offer the use of my stable to mademoiselle, et son frère?"

"If my niece rides, of which I was not aware, I willingly give

my consent, and thanks."

"I seldom ride," replied her niece. "Should I wish to do so, I shall not fail to remember Monsieur le général's offer: and now shall not forget to be grateful for it."

She spoke formally and ill at ease: in a way, indeed, most un-

like her usual manner.

"And where else have you been?" said Paula.

"Where?" Henri answered; "Oh, we went to the Haras au

"You really seem to have become wonderfully fond of horses."

said la comtesse.

"And then where did you go?" questioned Henriette, dreading a silence which might be broken by the general addressing herself.

"Oh, then—then, where did we go, Monsieur le général?"

Before he could reply, Henri added,

"Oh, I know; we were going to l'Hôtel Cluny; but as we passed up the Rue Richelieu, we dropped into Frasca..." He made a dead stop, evidently betraying that it was some place he had been cautioned not to mention. The general's face bore upon it the marks of extreme vexation.

"Where? What is that?" questioned Paula.

Henriette fixed her eve on her brother's face, but never spoke:

she at once read some secret he wished to retain.

"Do I understand aright," said la comtesse, in a measured tone, "that you, my nephew, have been to Frascati's, that den of infamy? Oh, general, why take the boy there?"

Henriette turned pale: an unaccountable terror possessed her.

"What is Frascati's?" she asked.

"A gambling house," answered la comtesse; "a receptacle for all the infamy of Paris; promise me, Henri, never to return."

"I am grieved," said the general, "to have done a thing to dis-

please you so much; but I really did it from a good motive. deeming it best he should visit it with me, than with wild youths

like himself."

"I am sure your intention was a right one," answered la comtesse, "pardon my warmth. But of all miscalled amusements, gambling is the one of which I have the greatest horror. It degrades—it debases the nature; bringing you in hourly contact with all the canaille of Paris, and the world. When it was a courtly pastime it was different: you played with gentlemen, lost to gentlemen ;-but now-"

Oh, Henri." said Henriette, "think of it as a dreadful vice, in any and every shape. If you lose, you are yourself lost; if you win, perhaps some misguided idiot has staked his all on a die: you gain, and he in despair destroys himself. Oh, my dear brother!" and her eyes filled with tears, as she grasped his arm.

"I really am shocked," said the general, "at the consequence of my well-meant act: pray forgive me, one and all." He looked

round the circle.

"What a fuss about nothing!" cried Henri, "Why, we did not touch a die or card. Pardon me, Monsieur le général, for

having raised this storm.

"Then say no more, Henri," interrupted la comtesse. "And General, I freely pardon you; I know your intention was a good one;" she gave him her hand; "but so great a horror have I of gambling at those dreadful places, that if son or nephew of mine

frequented them, I would never see him more."

At that moment the curtain again rose. Poor Paula's eyes were anxiously directed towards it. She did not exactly expect Edgar: she only thought it just possible he might venture to come. but the curtain swung back as the door opened and others entered; it fell-and no Edgar. A group of ladies arrived this time then more, then Lord Vesey, to inquire after their healths; and the one so painfully looked for, and quite as anxious to come, was kept at bay by that hydra-etiquette.

Lord Vesey made himself at home at once, and again sat beside the fair sisters. The general had risen as the beyv of ladies entered, and Vesey slid into his chair. Paula smiled, delighted. A heavy scowl came over the general's face as he looked on Vesey. and beheld him so well received by the two sisters. There is a freemasonry between guileless hearts; they seek and soon under-

stand each other.

After awhile something attracted Henri to the window: the general strolled towards him.

"You have played me a fine trick," he said: "I bade you not

mention where we had been."

"Forgive me; I inadvertently named it."

"'Tis a pity," said the other drily, in an indifferent tone; "it might have sometimes amused you: all the handsomest women in Paris too are there of an evening."

"We can go again," cried Henri, earnestly; "do not fear my

imprudence.

"Oh, it is impossible!" and he moved away.

There was a certain dignity in the general calculated to win respect, and therefore the more dangerous. He did not play the young man, but all was done with proud condescension. He never forgot his sixty years, and this made him the more to be dreaded by those who had an interest in a young man. He had resolved that Henri should return, but he had equally determined that he should now lead him. His motive—for he had one—might never require to be matured, and in that uncertainty he kept the cards in his hand to deal at discretion.

They returned to the fireplace just as one of the ladies exclaimed, "Is it possible, madame la comtesse, that a lady of such exquisite taste and fashion has not been to St. R—— to hear the Abbé de Brissac preach? I know that no prejudice against our religion

withholds you."

"Oh no," answered she, "to tell you the candid truth, I have heard so little about him lately, that I had forgotten his existence."

"Is it possible?" chimed in half-a-dozen voices.

"May I inquire of whom you are speaking?" asked Henriette of

a lady near hêr.

"Why, ma chère demoiselle, of that lion of lions, the Abbé de Brissac. Monsieur de Brissac, young—he is but thirty now,—taking an utter disgust, for some unexplained cause, to marriage, the world, and its gaieties, with a handsome fortune, and a face and figure too to drive all France mad, eschews all, takes orders, and now, as the handsomest of handsome abbés, wins every ear and heart by his eloquence, which is the most beautiful and poetical; and still he harps against matrimony except as a moral tie, endeavouring rather to lead all our youth to celibacy and the priest-hood."

"Why," laughed la comtesse, "he will make enemies of all the unmarried ladies in Paris; in another century, the world will be depopulated of all *legitimité*. Henriette you shall accompany me

on Sunday to hear this wonder."

"I met him at Madame de Verneuil's," said Lord Vesey, "and really thought him a most fascinating man,—perfectly unaffected. I am sure that man sincerely feels all he preaches."

"And so handsome! is he not milord?" asked a fair lady. "Oh.

those beautiful eyes! those exquisite features!"

"I am afraid," said the general, laughing, "you ladies all

" 'Forget the preacher in the man.'"

"Oh, what sacrilege!" shrieked half-a-dozen.

"C'est un saint homme!"

"So we are all—till we are discovered," answered this sceptic in virtue; "may I ask what trials your saintly abbé has undergone?"

"Oh! his giving up the world shows his goodness."

"Does it? Do you think, madame, it is not a very pleasant thing to draw around him such faces as yours, all gazing upwards to his? I always envy, never pity such saints."

The general, though professedly a Catholic, was an infidel, and

had one point of bad taste, too common to many—a love of casting ridicule upon religion and its ministers.

After some more conversation and badinage, the visitors by degrees withdrew, and the hôtel resumed its former quietude.

CHAPTER XV.

FREQUENT letters passed between la comtesse and Monsieur de Rouvray. In all that the lady received from her brother, he pressed upon her the necessity of withdrawing Paula as much as possible from the society of Edgar. Circumstanced as they both were, her parents having consented to their union, it was impossible to use harsh measures, and forbid them all intercourse.

At first, the aunt thought it would have been an easy task to separate them. Like the generality of the world, she imagined that Paula's light-heartedness was the effect of a levity of disposition and of a vacillating mind; but she was grossly mistaken. The girl was all feeling, guileless and innocent; but she possessed. when she was called upon to exercise it, a judgment, extraordinary in one so young. She could not affect what she did not feel. neither could she conceal her feelings. It is true, her mind, though sustained by sterling qualities, was still unformed, yet she would never be misled by vanity, or frivolous attractions as her aunt had at first supposed, though she might be dazzled and drawn

aside for a brief space.

Accordingly, her aunt found her toils by no means so easy as she had hoped they would prove. Paula was firm in her loyalty to Edgar, and quite unmoved by the admiration of others: Henriette was equally stubborn in her dislike of Général de la Valerie, and in maintaining the sentiment of mere friendship, in return for the evident pleasure with which Vesey sought her society; and the worst of it was, that the dreadful dash (as la comtesse considered it) of English blood in their veins, rendered them both incapable of encouraging the idea of a mariage de convenance. Thus her letters to the baron were far from cheering. She suggested that were her nieces entirely under her control, and their mother and Manette away, something might be done. Of Henri, she could not say enough in praise,—which little gratified his father.

As regarded Madame de Rouvray, he was quite resolved that no consideration in the world should separate her from her family, of

whom she was the natural protectress.

Madame la comtesse, and her brother, alike looked forward to the moment when Edgar should return to Alger; were he away, much might be done. With something like patience the former consented to his visits, under certain restraints, upheld by the hope of his speedy departure. He had still a month to remain, when one morning, about a week after the foregoing events, he entered the hôtel radiant with happiness. He had just received an intimation that his regiment was returning to France, consequently he need not rejoin it at Alger. Glory had struck her colours to love! True, his leave was abridged by a fortnight—but think of the delight of being quartered at Lyons instead of Alger! No sea between them, a few leagues, no more. Edgar could not contain

his rapture; and Paula!—no words could express her joy.

Henriette almost shuddered as she gazed into the recesses of her own heart; for much and truly as she loved Paula, the selfishness of our human nature, that almost ineradicable vice, was not powerless even in her bosom, and a deep regret stole over her involuntarily at the prolonged and threatened suffering which Edgar's more frequent presence in all probability would occasion her. She had never dared to place before her mental vision the time, the hour when he should become her sister's husband, it was one of those unreal visions to which we can give no tangible forms.

We must now return to where we left our personages.

On the Sunday following the conversation we have given, relative to the Abbé de Brissac, la comtesse and her nieces prepared to visit l'Eglise de St. R— to hear this celebrated man. It was an immense effort for the former to be prepared in time, for she was no frequenter of churches of any kind, but not to be in the fashion would sorely have troubled her. Everybody was rushing to hear the abbé, and she began already to feel herself arrièréé in not having seen him since his return from Africa, whither he had been for two years in the service of his religion.

To him the Church had been what it should be to every preacher of the Gospel, a choice, after solemn conviction. None can effectually do their duty, or it is extremely difficult to do so, when it is not backed by inclination. In pursuance of duty he had sacrificed position, wealth, family, all; for though he had brought with him an ample fortune, the greater part of which was spent on the poor, or in deeds of charity, still he had lost a larger one designed for him by an uncle, who, however, enraged at his

entering the Church, bequeathed it to another relative.

Many persons assigned different motives for this choice; the greater part, (of course, all the ladies,) would have it that it was a disappointment in love, but they were wrong. The abbé had never loved, and consequently had never been disappointed. He had at an early age been his own master, to choose his own mode of life, and he had given his unreserved preference to the Church; his feelings towards the fair sex amounted almost to antipathy, and without a sigh of regret he renounced them for holy orders.

Many a noble dame tried to allure him to her salons, but he rarely mingled in such scenes. Had they sought the miserable garret or place of refuge of some dying wretch, there they might have found the Abbé de Brissac. He had sojourned in the most unhealthy parts of Africa for nearly two years, and now, more admired than ever, returned to his Parisian followers.

Yet, notwithstanding his unquestioned virtue and goodness, he little resembled the meek and lowly Père Andriot. Even while

the poor man listened, and thanked him for his prayers and charity, it was a relief to him when he departed. The abbé was stern and unbending. Never having known human weakness or frailty himself, he could scarcely excuse it in others. You looked upon him, and the very atmosphere around became frigid.

He was a soldier priest, giving no quarter; with him it was war to the knife; he met sin and defied it; he shook the sinner's soul, and found no leniency in his mind for the fault which perhaps his

rigour hardened in the heart, instead of eradicating.

La comtesse's carriage with all its armorial bearings drew up at the church at a really early hour, for she found that she would be obliged. malaré elle, to sit out the whole mass, or get no place. Even at that unreasonable hour for Parisian ladies, who rise late. and seldom dress in the morning, the church was fast crowding. and the streets were lined with equipages.

As they alighted, and mounted the steps. Henriette started. At the top, near the entrance, stood the redoubted general. La comtesse gave him three fingers (a great effort for her), à l'Anglaise.

To the younger ladies the general merely bowed.

"How is it we find you here?" she asked.

"I was desirous of convincing myself," he answered, "how far ladies' good resolutions will carry them. A great way, I perceive, for madame and her fair nieces are in time for mass! How they would have been for places, I know not, had I not given a douceur to the woman to keep chairs. However, there are but three, so I will deprive myself of the pleasure of sitting with you." (his eye fell on Henriette,) "and await your sortie."

"I really am shocked," cried la countesse, "at taking your

place."

"Pray do not allow that feeling to overcome you. I daresay I shall find a seat somewhere. To say the truth, a sermon has few charms for me; and, separated from your fair society, I shall probably stroll out until it is over. May I then see you to your carriage?"

"I shall be charmed." She really felt so. Half the mothers in Paris had been endeavouring for years to catch the general, and behold, without one effort on her part, it was evident he was only

too ready to throw himself at her eldest niece's feet.

"I must lead you to your seats, however," he added, "and

then leave you to yourselves.'

Henriette felt delighted that he was not going to sit beside her; it would have been a constraint upon her, even before Heaven: so much did she feel the strange repugnance to him. which he had inspired from the first.

"Think of me in your prayers, mademoiselle," he said, in a tone which, though bland, sounded like irony.

"I trust I may not!" passed through Henriette's mind.

"What a delightful man Monsieur le général is," whispered the aunt, as she knelt down on her prie-dien.

"I don't like him," said Paula, somewhat bluntly; "I am sure he's insincere.'

Henriette said nothing. Though not her church, she thought

it was no place for idle conversation.

The church was densely crowded long before the abbé arrived. When he entered, a pin might have been heard to drop. As you looked around on the gaily dressed multitude there, a strange forgetfulness might have come over you as to place and person: from the excited aspects of that crowd, you might almost have expected at the first uttered word of the preacher to have heard the building ring with plaudits and bravos. But there was silence upon all, save one—Paula—for, as her eve lighted on the priest, almost a cry escaped her. Henriette hastily turned towards her sister, who sat pale and fixedly gazing on the abbé. She recognised in him the intellectual and accomplished stranger whom she had met at the ball at the Mairie; ball, it can scarcely be said, for, the fireworks over, he had quitted the gay scene.

To Henriette's anxious question of "Are you ill, Paula?" she

replied. "Oh. no: I fancied something, but was wrong."

Why did she speak thus evasively? she could not herself have

answered it to her own heart.—it was involuntary.

The abbé moved onwards like a statue, indued with motion. He has been called handsome; no words could convey an adequate idea of a beauty almost more than human. He was considerably above the middle stature. The surplice hardly permitted the eye to judge the graceful outline of his form. His eyes were dark as an Indian's with all their depth, and shaded by lashes whose silken lustre almost glittered when the sun fell on them. The hair was equally dark, the forehead noble; an aquiline nose, an expressive mouth, not too small, and before you stands the Abbé de Brissac. He was very pale; the face, too, looked worn with thought and continual vigils.

It seemed a relief to all when he commenced his sermon. The full rich voice, yet melancholy in its cadence, penetrated and pervaded every part of the church. Of all he uttered, not one word was lost in that vast concourse. Madame la comtesse and her nieces were seated close to the pulpit, where they could well observe him. Once, his eyes fell on them—a deep, full gaze. Possibly he knew la comtesse—knew her to be of another faith: for his gaze was long and steadfast. Or did he recognise Paula?

"Surely I have seen him before, somewhere?" whispered Henriette to her sister. "But where? Do you remember him? Yet

I certainly never heard him preach."

"No, never," was the ambiguous reply: leaving half her sister's question unanswered. Paula did not like to deceive; yet, for some unaccountable reason, she could not have spoken her thoughts even to Henriette.

They found the general awaiting them as they quitted the

church.

"Well, ladies," he said, "what do you think of this cynosure of

all eyes—this lady-killer ?"

"He is really divine,' answered la comtesse; but I, you know, have heard him before. You should ask mes nièces."

"My question was to all," he replied. "But individually: what does Mademoiselle de Rouvray think of the abbé? Is he not all I say ?"

"A lady-killer?" asked Henriette. "No, I cannot imagine any one regarding such a man as a mere mortal, like ourselves.

Can he ever have admitted an erring thought?"

"You are an enthusiast," observed the general with a sneer. "I presume you, mademoiselle, like half Paris, will become a follower of this saint?"

"Surely it is not the merely handsome man that all flock to see

and hear ?"

"What else? Put an angel (an ugly one) in his robes, and see how much later your Parisian ladies will lie a-bed of a morning

when he preaches."

"That man believes in nothing pure or true," thought Henriette; then added, aloud: "I cannot help fancying I have seen him before; but it must be imagination—I cannot have done so."

"Paula, you are silent," said la comtesse; "come; whilst we, perforce, wait here in the cold for our carriage, tell us what you

think ?"

"I don't know," she answered, gravely; "il me fait peur."
The general laughed. _" Peur?" he said, "and wherefore?"

"I scarcely know. Thank Heaven I am not one of his parishioners," and her eyes thoughtfully sought the ground. Henriette looked amazed; more than once she noticed thought in Paula, which she never imagined that light heart capable of. It made her sigh; it appeared as if Nature were perfecting the work. to enable it to meet and combat with some heavy grief.

The carriage drew up at last, and their cavalier not unwillingly

accepted a seat home.

"Le jeune Baron Henri," he said, "had promised to call upon

him that morning; he should thus save him the trouble."

"You are really too good to my nephew," said la comtesse; "I hope he will—he must, though—prove grateful."

"As to any return I expect," he replied, "I make no doubt I

shall receive it.

A strange expression came over his face as he spoke; it came and passed, unnoticed by all save Henriette. Nothing in that man escaped her; she feared him.

Little passed worth noticing when they returned. The general partook of the second déjeuner with them, and then departed with Henri.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE next morning was one of those hopelessly wet ones which induce you at once to decide on making in-door arrangements for the day.

Henriette could not walk with her mother. Poor Paula had

little hope of seeing Edgar to-day; of late he had met and walked with her in the Luxembourg Gardens, under the maternal eye of Madame de Rouvray, accompanied by her sister.

Madame de Rouvray, despite her husband's letters of advice, could not but feel pleasure in witnessing the content of those two

young hearts.

Poor Edgar! he durst not come early. Paula would fain have rebelled, but Bastien was ever there, under her aunt's strict com-

mands, to oppose his entrance.

It was only when she herself set in solemn state as salon, that Paula might receive his attentions; but then it was an immense satisfaction to know that, sanctioned by her mother's presence, she could meet in the gardens unknown to her aunt.

Who has not examined the perverse nature of the elements when some projected pleasure has been perforce abandoned be-

neath their power.

Edgar had solicited Paula's portrait.

"I have two motives," he said, "in asking it; the first to possess your likeness, the second, to do an act of charity. Amongst my camarades in arms, is one whom I much like and respect; poor fellow! he has only his meagre pay as a lieutenant, and out of that he contributes to the support of an invalid mother. She cesides close at hand, in the Rue Jacob, adding to her small inrome by portrait painting. Alas! she gains but little. I have called several times to visit her. I dare not offend her pride (none possess that more than the reduced) by offering assistance. I do not imagine her to be a first-rate artist; but however bad the likeness may be, I shall know that you, Paula, sat for it, and it will be as dear to me as if a Rubens had painted it; moreover, in this manner I may, without offending, do her a service. Will you sit to her, chérie?"

And Paula, pressing his hand, said, "Oh, with delight. But

how? and my aunt?"

"Ever that aunt!" sighed he. "But if Madame de Rouvray would accompany us of a morning, the thing would be accomplished."

Henriette was consulted, and willingly promised to induce her mother to accede to their wishes. And on this fatally wet morn-

ing was to have been the first sitting.

Paula and her sister sat disconsolately in the salos at their broderie. Now and then the former would run to the window and look out—alas, it was hopeless: down came the heavy rain—down, slown, down—a continuous fall.

"Is it not heart-breaking?" she said, reseating herself.
"Don't fret, Paula, it will be fine to-morrow, I trust."

"Yes, but Edgar leaves so soon, it may not be completed; for his friend's mother has such bad health she can work but slowly."

"Well then, you can send it to him."

"Oh, that is not the same thing. I want him to be there while I sit. Provoking rain!" and she broke her worsted impatiently.

At this juncture Heari entered. They had seen but little of

him lately; he was always out, or going out, and ever with the odious general. He too, was cross: "they had projected a party," he said, "à cheval, and here was nice weather."

"Where were you going, Henri?" asked his elder sister.

"Oh! I don't exactly know; into the country."

"And with whom?"

"Général de la Valerie."

She sighed.

"There you are sighing again," he said, crossly; "you make a point of doing so whenever I speak of the general; and I am sure he is a friend of mine."

"Are you certain of that?" saked Paula. "I am sure we ought not to thank him, for ever since you have known him, you are as

changed as possible—always in an ill-temper."

"I wish you would go out with Edgar instead," said Henriette,

mildly.

"I was on the point of saying so," cried Paula, "I am sure he's

of a more suitable age, and he feels your neglect.

"I cannot help his feelings," answered Henri, roughly; "what use would Edgar be to me in Paris, he knows nobody, and could take me nowhere."

"He might not certainly take you to gambling-houses," said

Paula. Henri coloured deeply.

"Who says he does? You are—"
"Milord Vesey," said Bastien, throwing open the portières.

Both the girls smiled: his arrival changed the current of the conversation. He was warmly welcomed, for both liked him. Paula sighed. "Poor Edgar," she thought, "he alone is excluded;" not but that la comtesse always disapproved of gentlemen calling before she descended; but then. Vesey and the

general were privileged persons.

The girls left their frames and entered into conversation; Vesey and Henri sat side by side. There was the same English style about both, which made it seem a family group. As they sat chatting, the door opened, and Madame de Rouvray entered. She now not unfrequently joined her children in the salon, in the morning, when anything prevented their taking their usual walk. She had never been presented to Lord Vesey, ever avoiding an introduction to visitors, if possible, most of all with English ones.

"Allow me to present my mother, Lord Vesey," said Henriette,

rising to meet and lead her to a chair.

Madame de Rouvray almost started back, then overcoming a momentary nervousness, curtseyed, and scarcely looking at Vesey, seated herself near her child.

After a while, when his attention was diverted, she looked fixedly at him: a strange and painful expression passed over her

face, and she dropped her eyes in deep thought.

"Yes," said Lord Vesey, in reply to a question from Henri,
"I most unwillingly am leaving Paris awhile, but my father is
not quite well. I trust my absence will not be much prolonged."

F 2

Madame de Rouvray made what was a strange effort for her,

and tremblingly inquired:-

"May I ask the name of Lord Vesey's father? It must seem gross ignorance in me; but I have been so long absent from England, that things which should be familiar, are unknown."

"The Earl of Courtown," he answered; "a cousin of my father's, the late earl, dying suddenly without a family, he succeeded to the titles and estates. Perhaps you may better know him by his own name. It was—"

"Monsieur le Général de la Valerie," announced Bastien, again

opening the doors.

"Ha!" said the new-comer, glancing round, "a goodly company, this miserable day;" and saluting them, he drew near. He had been presented the previous day to Madame de Rouvray, and now seating himself between her and Henriette, who had drawn a little nearer to her embroidery frame as he entered, commenced talking with that lady, who did not pursue her question. The general was as unpleasing to her as to her daughter.

The conversation turned on amusements; operas were discussed, new novels criticised, and under the protection afforded by the

animated talk, Vesey approached Henriette's frame.

Madame de Rouvray sat evidently ill at ease. Paula would converse gaily with the general, because she saw he was watching, and trying to catch what was said by Vesey, who was speaking in rather a low tone to her sister; Henri, too, unwittingly furthered her object, by joining in, and thus shutting from his ear—even his acute one—Vesey's words.

At first they were merely commonplace. "That rose," he said, "is it, as our poet says,

'To soothe my brother's cares?"

"No," she answered, smiling, "I fear he would but trample it under foot. And, à propos, that will be its fate; it is intended for an ottoman."

"How many things that we have wrought with pleasure meet no better fate!" As he uttered this an involuntary sigh escaped him; his mind was evidently far from the actual subject of his discourse. Henriette looked up; their eyes met in a free, unembarrassed manner; there was a feeling of true and sincere friendship between Henriette and Lord Vesey, and, strange to say, neither appeared for the moment to seek or desire a warmer one. Was it the effect in each heart of an absorbing passion elsewhere?

"You are sad to-day, my lord," she said, looking up with her

gentle eyes.

"I am," he replied, in a low voice; "circumstances force me to

quit Paris, and I leave much in France to regret."

A painful blush rose to her cheek. She dreaded what the next sentence might be, and whether a hope of love expressed by him, would not destroy her sincere interest, and hitherto unrestrained interchange of feeling and thought with one whose ideas were ever consonant with her own. Perhaps something too of this arose in

his mind, for he added somewhat hastily, noticing her heightened colour, "There is a subject—a strange one, perhaps, between us, almost strangers, Mademoiselle de Rouvray, and yet before I go I would fain speak of it." This was still more perplexing; she trembled. "I mean," he continued, abruptly, "a strange subject from me to a young lady, and yet an uncontrollable impulse induces me to seek your advice, and, may I say, sympathy?"

She became more confused and embarrassed; indeed, she was quite incapable of uttering a word. It is a most painful position to have much regarded a person and suddenly to feel the absolute necessity of giving a check to hopes which you have done nothing

to encourage.

"I fear," he said, "you mistake me. You seem pained. I had hoped that my own clear-sightedness with regard to yourself had created a sympathetic enlightenment on your part with respect to me. All I have to say has so much of sincere regard in it, even though it be the growth of a short acquaintance, so earnest a desire before I go, to cement a—may I say, mutual friendship, that I grieve to have involuntarily alarmed you into a supposition that I sought your love. Let me be candid, and then approve my motives. I do not presume to seek your love, other than what may be bestowed on a cherished friend. I love another, and," he added, almost unintelligibly, so low was his tone, "your heart is not quite free—that is, for your own sake, I fear not."

She started, and her cheek gradually became paler and paler. "Perhaps I am selfish, Mademoiselle de Rouvray, in thus speaking. Do not, however, call me unfeeling; I seek your sympathy, mine has already been given. I too am not happy in my affection. I scarcely can explain why my heart yearns towards you, but you must seek the mystical reason, perhaps, in some former state. Do you believe in transmigration?" He evidently wished to give her

sufficient time to recover herself.

"Oh no," she uttered, and her voice was low and sad, "it is

beyond my reasoning powers-such a belief."

"Well, then, only believe that from some mysterious cause I never saw the woman yet whose friendship I so ardently desired

as I do yours; will you believe all this?"

"I will, I do!" she exclaimed, looking in his face kindly, though the eye was slightly clouded with confusion at the reference to (as she had hoped) her heart's hidden sorrow; she did not know that, whereas the eye of love may be sometimes blinded, true friendship is ever clear-sighted and seldom mistaken. "I will, I do! in what can I serve you?"

"Thanks for that kind assurance and offer." Involuntarily he pressed the white hand lying on the frame beside him. "May I see you alone, to-morrow? I leave for England the following

day; my father is seriously ill, I fear."

"Gladly will I see you to serve or advise, though-"

"Mademoiselle de Rouvray has dropped her worsted, her couleur de rose," said the general beside her, offering a skein."

Both Vesey and herself started, and the odious interrupter drew

a chair close to hers. Vesey found it impossible to say another

word, and prepared to depart.

"I leave the day after to-morrow for England," he said aloud, looking meaningly at Henriette, "and hope before my departure to make my adieux for a short time to these fair ladies." Then turning to Madame de Rouvray, he said in English. "allow me to express the great pleasure it has afforded me to make the acquaintance of my countrywoman."

The English tongue had become to Madame de Rouvray but a memory, and strange to her ears. For some unaccountable reason tne Baron de Rouvray had never permitted his children to acquire

the English language.

Madame de Rouvray looked up; her eyes were filled with tears. "I thank your lordship much," she said, almost in a whisper;

she added with feeling, "our hearts, even after years of absence, yearn towards home and its early memories."

"I trust we may meet soon and often," he answered, not without emotion, and taking the small, cold hand, he warmly pressed it; and once more bowing around, he quitted the room.

Madame de Rouvray burst into an uncontrollable fit of weeping.

Her daughters flew to her side.

"Let me go up stairs, Henriette," she said; "I am unfit for company."

"Not alone, dearest mother," they exclaimed.

"Yes," she whispered, imploringly, "I wish to go alone—only to Manette, only to Manette. Pray do not come."

Her wishes were ever as laws: Henriette closed the door on her

mother and returned to her seat, wondering what Lord Vesey could have said to affect her so much.

"Madame de Rouvray seems of a nervous, excitable temperament," said the general; "I should think the quiet of the country better suited to her than Paris."

"She is better now than we have seen her for a length of time." answered Paula. "Something has affected her to-day.

"It is the fault of you girls, as much as anything," Henri muttered; "you are always sighing about her, and making her

fancy herself ill."

"Henri," replied his elder sister, resolutely, "it might seem right to you to speak thus of our mother, but I will not sit by and hear her even alfuded to slightingly. There was a time when you felt as you ought to feel, for her low, nervous state. What has perverted your once warm good-nature I know not: but you will some day regret it."

"I really do not recognise Henri," said Paula. He seems to

hate us all lately, -always cross and unkind."

The general's eye was on him. What could his motive be for thus endeavouring to estrange the young man from his family? It was that prevailing demon on earth, policy, which having its base end in view, ruthlessly tramples down every finer feeling.

For an instant the brother paused—then youthful thoughts and affection conquered. He saw again in his mind's eye the green

fields of home and their walks, their pains and pleasures shared; he remembered, too, many a kind word from his dear and afflicted mother; and under the blessed influence of both feelings, he rose, and approaching his sisters said, as he tenderly embraced them.—

"Forgive me, Henriette, and you, little Paula. I am cross—I am not quite myself—something has annoyed me: there, let us make it up; I will never speak of notre paure mère as I have

done."

The loving arms of both were round his neck. The general was forgotten, all but cher Henri; but as that man looked on the brother and sisters, he seemed uneasy.

"What has annoyed you, mon frère!" asked Henriette. Before

he could reply, the other interrupted them with,-

"Come, come, it is unfair to conjure his secrets from him under an irresistible charm,—your caresses. I can answer for his cares being light, for I think I know all that has affected him of late. Come, de Rouvray, be yourself; this is very charming, but it

makes even an old man jealous."

Henri looked almost the Henri of des Ormes, as he reseated himself. Henriette, however, observed a strange glance pass between him and the other. Then he rose, and going to the window, commenced that never-to-be-despised companion of a preoccupied mind, "the devil's tattoo," on the glass.

"Still raining?" asked the general.
"Pouring," was the laconic reply.

Henriette sat on thorns; she would fain have gone to her mother, but for her positive command to the contrary. Paula thought of Edgar and her portrait. There was a moment's silence, broken at last by her rising to leave the room. Before she went, leaning over her sister's chair, as though admiring the work, she whispered.—

"Do not leave Henri alone with that horrid man; try and prevent their going out together. I am sure he is doing the boy

some injury."

"Where are you going?"

"To write a line to poor Edgar; Manette will run with it to the Rue Jacob, where he was to wait for us." Turning to the general, she curtseyed slightly.

"Going, mademoiselle?" he asked; "this is not right, it is a star lost in our hemisphere; you destroy our partieure, this wet

day."

Paula muttered some few words in apology, and quitted the room. Henri still stood at the window. His nater was thinking of the strange conversation she had had with Vesey; it pained her, for though she liked him much, and with a sincerity which astonished herself, yet it wounded her delicacy to know that her soul's secret was in any man's possession. As she was still pondering, utterly forgetful of all around her, she was aroused by the general saying,—

"Come, de Rouvray, go and change your morning costume, and let us go out; my carriage will take us to the salle d'armes.

I am desirous," he added, turning to Henriette, "to make your brother a William Tell, au pistolet; it is a most necessary accomplishment for a gentleman in the event of an affair of honour, or in self-defence.

"As a defence," she answered; "but I am, as my aunt says, too

English, to think duelling right.

Do you not think there may be cases?"

"I really cannot answer; it is a subject on which I have never thought much; it may be a necessary vestige of ancient ferocity, amidst modern civilization.

"There are certain injuries, which man inflicts upon man; how

avenge, rather, I should say, how punish them?"

She was silent.

"A coward might submit to them, but a brave man encounters his enemy, face to face. There are probably many cowards in a field of battle, led on, forced on, passive in the hands of a host rushing forward; but none but a brave man ever fought a duel."

As he spoke, he had seated himself beside Henriette, and was carelessly watching her busy fingers—Henri had gone to dress.

"But this is a strange theme for a lady's ear, mademoiselle: let

us change it."

She trembled; even the habit, now so constant, of seeing him, could not overcome her dislike and dread.

"You are very silent," he continued; "has Milord Vesey left you thoughtful?"

She coloured. "I was not thinking of him; had I been, it would have been in kindness; he is a man for whom, even after our short acquaintance, I have a sincere respect."

"Respect! nothing more? Oh! then there may be hope for

another.

She looked up and met his eye; hers fell again.

"I will not," he said in a soft voice, "speak of disparity of age or difference of religion—these are trifles, if people properly regard them; but I will speak of gratitude and affection, of watchful love, of all a man should feel towards a wife, if Mademoiselle de Rouvray will honour me with her hand."

She really could not speak; a sense of fulness in the throat im-

peded her utterance. He continued:-

"I am well aware that in first addressing you, I infringe an understood rule towards young ladies, but I preferred making an appeal to your heart before asking the consent of Madame la comtesse."

"General de la Valerie," said she, looking up, while her white hands rested tremblingly on the frame, and her cheek grew pale; "forgive my abruptness, but it is best at once to terminate a subject which, the more it is prolonged, is the more painful. Grateful as I am for your offer, I never can be your wife."

She spoke firmly, though her lips quivered. "Never?" he said, slowly; "think again."

"Never, Monsieur le général; your age is not the objection; but I never could marry, unless I loved, or, at all events, sincerely

regarded my husband. I may speak too plainly, but it is best at once to check hopes which may not be fulfilled. My affections in no way lead me towards you. Pardon me, if I give you pain."

He rose—there was a dark scowl on that leaden brow. " you for your candour," he said; when I make a second appeal. I trust it may be with more success. I shall not importune you.

Time may do much; I will with patience await it."

She looked at him as he crossed to the window and thought. "Time. time, that is for the young: for life and its pleasures, ties, and affections; this man has but time to prepare for the grave."

"I dreaded your decision," he said, once more returning to the fireside: "but was resolved to know my fate to-day—it may

decide much."

Before she could reply, Henri and Paula entered. The latter started at seeing the general still there; she had followed her

brother to the salon.

"Still beside your hearth, Mademoiselle," he said gaily; "I have been endeavouring to amuse your sister with an old man's fancies. I fear my success has not been great, for Mademoiselle de Rouvray looks pale."

"Paula placed her hand on her sister's shoulder.

"Tis true," she exclaimed. "Come, Henriette, put away your broderie, and let us sing. Here, Henri, we want your voice in a trio;" and she moved towards the piano. "I know Monsieur le général likes music," she added, apologetically.
"No one better; but I fear to-day I must deprive myself of

the pleasure of hearing you sing. Your brother and I are going to the salle d'armes-Mars, not Apollo, swavs us this morning."

"Oh! Henri," she cried; "pray remain with us."
"Impossible!" he said; "le général and I have an appoint-

ment there."

"They were leaving the room, the other bowing his adieux rather constrainedly. Some strange feeling prompted Henriette; she sprang towards her brother: the general was already in the antechamber.

"Henri, my brother, pray, pray do not go to-day. Only this

once oblige me. Stay with us, my own dear brother.'

Paula grasped the other arm.
"Don't be silly," he said, in something of his usually hasty tone. I must go there," he added, more gently; I'm only going for an hour."

"Venez-vous?" said the general, looking in.

The girls released their hold, and the two departed.

"Paula," said her sister, clasping her arms around her; "I fear that man. I would to heaven Père Andriot were here! I dread something I cannot see, and he might teach us what we

should do to avert danger."

Henri had to pass his sister's room to reach his own. Tapping at the door, he generally said, "good night." It was broad daylight next morning, when she heard his footstep, as of a heavy heart, pass her chamber door. There was no "good night."

CHAPTER XVII.

A BRIGHT, clear, frosty morning succeeded to the one of twenty-

four bours before.

Madame de Rouvray, without an allusion to the scene in the salon, prepared to meet the wishes of her children, and accompany them to the poor invalid artist; she had acceded with pleasure to their desire. Herriette felt it would be compromising her mother's dignity to conceal from her aunt whither they were going; the wish on Edgar's part was a natural one, and her mother's presence sanctioned it.

La comtesse was dreadfully shocked. Had it been to sit to some celebrated artist, she might have overlooked it; but her nieces to visit a poor creature almost in a garret! she would not consent to such a thing willingly, and yet she scarcely durst forbid

it, as their natural guardian accompanied them.

Henri they had not seen. So exalted was the cold ceremony of their aunt's ideas of propriety, that his sisters must not seek him in his room alone. Before leaving home, however, Henriette begged her mother to go there with her. The door was bolted. To their appeal for admission, Henri replied impatiently, that he was well, but sleepy, and required rest.—aothing more.

Edgar was awaiting them in the Rue Jacob. Paula's face brightened so much at his approach, that Henriette inwardly felt it must indeed be a poor artist who could fail to catch something

of that beautiful expression, and transfer it to the ivory.

Happy they looked, those three, when mounting the steep stair an cinquième, where the limner resided. Madame de Rouvray, too, had become almost cheerful; it was ever so now when alone with her daughters; the cloud of the previous day had vanished from her face.

Edgar ran up first to announce them: scarcely was the door

opened by the pale invalid herself, when the others arrived.

He presented them, and those young faces brought a feeling of

pleasure even to the occupant of that poorly furnished room.

They entered. She was not alone—a tall figure rose before them. In that chamber of poverty and unrepining toil, to cheer and to comfort, stood the Abbé de Brissac! the admired, the courted, when his pride or indifference avoided the salon of the courtly dame, was there to impart consolation, and to speak the words of life.

They all drew back a pace.

"Pray enter," said the artist (Madame Lagrange), "Monsieur l'abbé will be too glad to meet those who do not despise my poor abode."

With a grace almost courtly he received them. The stern preacher was not to be seen there; he had come with peace to the afflicted, not in war to the worldly or the sinner. With one glance of his deep eyes he seemed to scan the group: a start of surprise passed over his face as he looked at the two sisters.

For a reason she could not have explained to herself, Paula had never recalled to Henriette's memory where they had first seen the abbé, and now they met as strangers, though each felt that the other was known: and Paula's eyes fell beneath the momentary but searching glance of his.

When they were seated, he said:—

"Madame Lagrange has a strong claim upon me: she is one whom I have known in a far country. I was well acquainted with her husband, who lost his life in Alger two years since.

"Yes," she replied, in a low tone, "the last words of the dying

reached my ears through him; I have reason to be grateful."

"Hush," he said, gently; "we must avoid these sad subjects: they unfit the mind for its every-day struggles." Then turning to Edgar, he added, "Here, too, is one I have met in far distant scenes; I trust you have not forgotten me."

"Monsieur l'abbé." exclaimed Edgar, in surprise. "Pardon

my not at once recalling you."

"Young eyes and hearts forget sooner than the more experienced, we see; and an impression once made is not easily forgotten-it should be so." Then changing his tone, which was almost of sadness, he added, looking at the sisters.—

"If I mistake not, I see before me two ladies who accompanied

Madame la Comtesse de Cressy to St. R---, last Sunday P

Paula sat transfixed. She was generally the first to speak, but his self-possession amazed her. His recognition of them much surprised Henriette; recovering, however, from it, she replied, "How hope to be noticed by Monsieur l'abbé? strangers, and in

such a crowd.

He smiled. "A growd to you," he answered; "but to us, living apart from the world in general, there is scarcely a face in the congregation which has not become familiar, and thus we immediately notice strangers. Madame la comtesse I have had the pleasure of seeing there before; once, too, I think, some two years since, I met her at Madame de Verneuil's. Being aware of the difference. in our persuasions, it is pleasing to be listened to when we seek to lead aright, and more particularly," he added, after an instant's pause, "with the attention, which is still more flattering in the young, and sometimes thoughtless, who are frequently only led by idle curiosity."

His eye wandered from Henriette's face and rested on Paula's:

it was a long and searching glance.

Here the conversation became general. In the course of it the abbé was made more acquainted with the family of the de Rouvrays, and the motives of their stay in Paris. There seemed a more than common interest in his manner, when he gracefully took leave of them, and not without a hope expressed of again passing so agreable an hour.

"I avoid—have a distaste for general society: its rules and ceremonies are unpleasing to me; but I trust," he added, "you will not look upon me as many do, as a cold ascetic monk. Nothing can be more genial to the heart than a morning spent like this;

and, with a smile which cast the radiance of an angel's over that

statue-like face, he departed.

"There," exclaimed Madame Lagrange, "walks a saint homme, if ever one existed; one who, in every temptation, has proceeded in firmness and truth on his chosen path; one who, with talents to charm a courtly hall, prefers the poor widow's room, which his presence sanctifies."

"There is something stern in him," said Henriette; "he rather appears to me a man who would meet temptation rather than fly from it, and defy it out of an assurance that his will could subdue it. I should think him self-confident, but I may be mistaken. He is a stranger, yet assuredly I have seen him somewhere before; his very tone is familiar, and was, too, on Sunday. The voice is peculiar. Moreover, Monsieur l'abbé admits his path to have been his choice from youth; he has but given up a world distasteful to him."

"Mademoiselle de Rouvray is prejudiced against our priest-

hood, perhaps?" said Madame Lagrange, timidly.

"Oh. far from it!" she exclaimed, with warmth. me to point out the truest Christian I ever knew, or could imagine, it would be Monsieur le Curé Andriot. Edgar's uncle;" and she

placed a hand kindly on his arm.

"And I," said Edgar, "must admit something myself of a prejudice, at first sight, against Monsieur l'abbé. I felt it in Alger, and again here, though I had forgotten him for the moment. Till the face becomes really animated, it is cold and stern; I never could confess to such a man even the venial errors of youth.'

"There we differ, Edgar," said Madame de Rouvray, in a low She had been attentively listening to the conversation. "There is a doctrine in your church most comforting-I mean confession. Were I a Catholic, there are few persons to whom I could open my whole heart and soul; the only one I have ever seen to whom I could do this is Monsieur de Brissac."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Henriette. "Why, maman?" "Because he possesses a power on which the weak might rely

in faith; a mind to guide, a heart to feel and pity."

This speech, so strange, from that usually timid woman, caused

a sensation of strong surprise in Edgar and her daughters.

"Chère maman," so Edgar not unfrequently had called her of late, when they were away from la comtesse; "Heaven forbid a gentle heart like yours should ever bend before the abbé. I fear he knows too little of human weakness to look leniently on even your little faults—sins they cannot be."

She looked down and sighed deeply.

"Here is one," said Madame Lagrange, addressing Paula, "who has not given her opinion of Monsieur l'abbé; what says Mademoiselle?"

Paula started as from a reverie, and said the same words she

had given utterance to at St. R—, "Il me fait peur."

"Shall we commence, madame?" she added, a moment after, springing from the chair, as if to banish a painful subject from her mind, and untying her bonnet.

"We were forgetting the short period allowed us for our task, mademoiselle," the other replied, glancing at Edgar, and busying herself in preparations. "Monsieur Andriot leaves in a week, I believe?"

"Alas! yes," sighed he; "but not for Alger, Madame Lagrange, only Lyons! Think how much sweeter to a lover's heart that

change of orders!"

Nothing more was said of the abbé, and gaily chatting, the first

séance was made.

After a kindly adieu, they parted with the poor artist, promising to return on the morrow. The day was lovely, and on leaving they all strolled into the gardens, and only returned in time to dress for dinner.

Madame la comtesse looked cross, and in a mood to be almost rude, could she have so far forgotten what was due to Madame de

Cressy, as to be so.

"Really," she said, as the trio entered (Edgar had left them at the porte cochère), "I shall rejoice when Monsieur Andriot returns to his regiment: I am left quite alone to receive every

one."

"We have been walking in the Luxembourg," said Madame de Rouvray, with quiet dignity. Her sister-in-law scarcely knew what to reply. "Naturally," she added, after a slight pause, "you took advantage of this fine day, but I think Henriette might have remained. I suppose she is not sitting for her portrait to this unknown genius?"

"You know, madame," answered Henriette calmly, "that every

fine day I walk out with maman."

"Yes, yes, quite right!" replied the other nervously; "but not to remain all day. Here have I been obliged to entertain a host of visitors alone, to say nothing of le Général de la Valerie, and Milord Vesey, who returned twice, hoping to see you to take leave. He started an hour ago for England;—fresh intelligence of his father's illness."

"I am sorry we did not see him," cried Paula; "he is a very nice young man: as to the general, he is toujours perdrix."

"Toujours perdrix?" cried her aunt indignantly, "pray, mademoiselle, be a little more select in your choice of expressions when speaking of my friends."

"I'll call him angel, madame," she replied, laughingly, "if you will keep him as your friend, and not class him amongst ours; we

all dislike him, don't we, Henriette?"

Henriette could not forbear a smile at her sister's candour.

"Does Lord Vesey return soon?" asked Madame de Rouvray.

"As soon as his father is better, or dead—I am sure the latter would be far the best!"

"Why?" inquired Henriette.

"Oh! because milord would then be a count—earl you call it;

and his father is very rich and an old man."

"Now that is very, very wrong," said Paula, shaking her finger at her aunt with mock gravity. "Perhaps he is a very good man,

and his son may be much attached to him; when you are old. madame, how would you like any one to put you out of the world in that summary manner ?"

Her childish, serio-comic tone was irresistible: Henriette burst

out laughing.

"Really, mesdemoiselles!" began their aunt, drawing herself up

frigidly.

Do not be angry," said Paula, embracing her, despite her struggles; "you are a dear, good soul when you please, only too arbitrary in your mode of disposing of persons you do not know;" and without any regard to the formalities of etiquette, she almost skipped out of the room, calling to her sister to come and dress."

No one, to have seen her at Madame Lagrange's and now, would have recognised the same girl; all gravity and thought there, and something more—she seemed awed. In the abbe's presence, she felt her duplicity, and knew not well how to cast it

off now.

Madame de Rouvray followed, and Henriette drew near her aunt. "Have you seen Henri?" she asked, almost tremblingly.

"Oh, yes. Amélie told me he had been ill. I was dreadfully alarmed, and when I sent to inquire, I learnt he had gone out, as

usual, in excellent health, to call on the general."

"As usual, indeed," sighed Henriette. "It is an unaccountable thing to me Henri is always running after Monsieur de la Valerie."

"And pray why?" asked Madame.

"In the first place, the difference of age makes him a most unsuitable companion for my brother."

"That is exactly like you very young girls," said her aunt, with verity. "Age! age! it seems a crime in your eyes to be old."

"Pardon me," answered her niece. "no one more respects re-

spectable age than I do."

"What, may I ask, do you call respectable age?"
"Oh! oh!"—she hesitated for a definition which might not

offend, "certainly not the general's."

"Pray, Henriette, let me continue to think you a sensible girl. I am about to test whether you are so. Be seated a moment."

Her niece seated herself tremblingly; she foresaw what was

coming.

Her aunt eyed her scrutinizingly a moment. "I have had," she said, "a long conversation with Monsieur de la Valerie, à propos de vous; in short, he has laid his hand and fortune at your feet. I have given my consent."

"I guessed this," answered Henriette; and my dear aunt,—let me call you so this once,-pray, if you love me, never name the subject again."

"Do you really mean to say you refuse?"

"I did so to-day, decidedly. I cannot even respect that man; what were marriage without esteem?"

"This is too ridiculous," cried her sunt, rising and pushing back

her chair and again reseating herself anguily. "I lose all patience:

and may I ask your motive?"

"Several, madame, ma tante: the first is difference of age, an objection which I think extends to his intimacy with Henri. The young should mate with the young.

"It is enough to drive one mad, Henriette! Here am I striving for your welfare, and you do all you can to injure the cause."

"I am most grateful, believe me; but, but-

"But, but," re-echoed the other, angrily. "I do sincerely wish your father were here, and in his letter to Paula to-day, he

"Did Paula hear from my father to-day?" asked Henriette, in

sorprise.

"Yes; and he does not even speak of coming. It is a heavy re-

sponsibility he has cast upon me.

Henriette did not hear her aunt; she was thinking her father had never written to her; and then she pondered on "dear little Paula's" considerate thoughtfulness and feeling in concealing from her that she had received a letter. It was true; Paula was beginning to read the world as it is, not as she had dreamed of it; and as her ideas expanded, much as she loved her father, she could not but blame his cold neglect of her brother and sister.

"They shall never know of this letter from me," thought she; and had that been her only duplicity it would have ranked amongst the virtues. But Paula was not possessed of that innate and beautiful love of truth, that purest and brightest gem which was

Henriette's greatest charm.

Amélie had delivered the letter, and it was immediately reported by that "treasure," as the comtesse called her, and Paula then showed it to her aunt.

"Perhaps, too," said her aunt to Henriette, after a silence, "you

dislike Milord Vesey, also?"

"Oh, no," answered the niece, delighted to be able to please her conscientiously; "I like his lordship very much: he is one for whose absence I am sorry."

"Ah! sh!" said the aunt, smiling pleasantly, and tapping her cheek, which had slightly coloured. "Enfin, some one pleases you, ch? I certainly should prefer milord, though he is English. He is a rich nobleman, and young enough to suit you."

"We do not always please those who please us." answered Henriette, evasively, hoping to end the conversation, and rising at the

same moment."

"Ah, petite finette!" cried madame, "there, go and dress; milord will return shortly, and pray don't forget to admire the charming bouquet he has left for you. C'est d'une galanterie Française."

"Bouquet?" exclaimed Henriette, "I have seen none."

"No, no, but you will. Amélie showed it to me. She's a treasure, that creature—just the person to be about young, inexperienced girls."

Henriette said nothing, but thought very differently, as she

escaped to her room to dress for dinner.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LORD VESEY thought little of a galanterie Française when he left the bouquet for Henriette; it was an emanation of pure

feeling, which is of no nation or country.

He had pondered much within himself whether he should write all he had been prevented from saying, and ask her counsel before leaving Paris. Something of the Englishman's proverbial apathy whispered to him. "Twill be time enough when you return."

Had he found Henriette at home that morning he would have sought her advice, but he thought it best not to write. "Time enough," he argued. So he returned twice, but she was from home, and letters received that morning so alarmed him about his father, that he left but a bouquet and a few lines with it, and

unwillingly quitted Paris.

When Henriette entered her room, Amélie met her smilingly, the flowers and note in her hand. The woman was all obsequiousness; she already saw herself "own maid" to a "milady," that French soubrette's dream of preferment. The bouquet was beautifully arranged; in the centre a group of roses, surrounded by the lovely, pale, speaking myosotis.

The note said:

"Allow me to make my adieux, through the medium of these flowers, to Mademoiselle de Rouvray; at the same time I deeply regret the haste which obliges me to leave many things unsaid. May the roses remind her of a conversation over the one she was embroidering yesterday, and the others will speak for themselves."

She looked at the pale blue little flower; it was already

drooping.

"Amélie," she said, "put these in a vase with spring water. Poor little forget-me-nots," she added to herself, "how frail ye are—like memory sometimes, I fear."

"Won't mademoiselle wear this beautiful bouquet?" asked

"No, it would be a pity. They are very pretty; they would soon wither in my hand without water."

When a woman loves, she thinks of her lover and places the flowers near her heart; when she is indifferent, the flowers are her first care, and she preserves their frail existence in water.

Madame la comtesse had her evening's chez elle, but still there were a few, a very few, permitted at all times to rap at the porte cochère, well assured of admission. The (to the sisters) odious general was one of the privileged.

Henri had not dined at home, and his sisters were both in much trouble about his almost continual absence. "Where could he be? What doing? Alas! there was no one to tell them!

Dinner was scarcely concluded, and the four ladies in the salon,

when he entered with the "toujours perdrix," as Paula had called

him.

"We." cried the latter gentleman, saluting the assembled group gallantly; "we are indeed fortunate! What, is there no ball? no opera? Nothing, in short, to call you ladies forth this evening?"

"Nothing," answered la comtesse, smiling. "But come here, you terrible man, and tell me where you and mon nevue have been. Eh! Dieu! Henri!" she exclaimed, "quelle coiffure

ebouriffee!"

All looked at Henri as she spoke.

"My dear son," said Madame de Rouvray, "do arrange your hair; you look wild."

"What have you been doing to yourself?" asked his sisters.
"Are you mad? look at your head!"

In truth he looked almost deranged. We have before said that Henri had a habit of throwing back his hair; but now not a curl remained on the handsome though not very intellectual brow-it was the forehead of a kindly, loving child, not of a man. The soft, silken, golden hair was wildly thrown back, as though its weight oppressed him. The eye was dilated and full of excitement: on the cheek was one red patch from the same cause—excitement, and from wine. Generally temperate as a woman, he had been drowning some painful thought in the glass.

He rose as his sisters and aunt spoke, and going to a mirror, brought back with his hand the stray curls, which now again clustered round his face. A wild, reckless laugh burst from him as he did so; he seemed in a state almost amounting to frenzy.

"Tiens! tiens! tiens!" he cried, with a shocking mockery of mirth, "I do look mad. And yet," he added, after a moment, "I have had enough to sober me!" This was uttered in a lower

Henriette had silently approached him. Laying her hand on

his arm, she said, "What, Henri?"

He looked almost vacantly at her, then bursting into a gay laugh, whose tone went to the heart, he said, taking her face in both his hands, "Why do you look so grave, Henriette? Look joyous: I do-vou should: we have only one heart between us. my sister, my twin! Tiens! look as I look; there, there," and he kissed her on both cheeks. There was something in his manner which made her heart ache, and tears filled her eyes. It was a large salon, and they were at the further end, away from the others.

"What are these in your eyes, Henriette? not tears, surely? Enfant! there—see, I have none. Look, how alike we are; only

you are sad, whilst I---"

He drew her with one arm before the mirror, and, forgetting himself, with the other hand again threw back his hair. He seemed oppressed, but more now with thought or trouble than wine.

Henriette's lip quivered; a strange terror came over her.

Drawing him gently on to a chair, she stood before him, and even though her hand trembled violently, she strove to soothe him into a more tranquil mood, arranging his wavy curls, as she had often before done, beneath her loving hand. He grew more collected, and as he looked up into the sweet face bending over his. a change was wrought in his own. He grew sad-very sad; his countenance fell, and the cold dew stood on that face, now pale

"Henriette," he whispered, "don't, don't: it would be desecration! promise me you will not." He was speaking to his own

thoughts.

"What, Henri, dearest?"

"Oh, nothing—that is, promise me you will consent to no proposition made to you without consulting me. darling?"

"Of whom-of what are you speaking? What can you mean?" "I scarcely know," he replied, now nearly sobered. "We will

talk of this to morrow."

During this scene, the general had appeared in an agony of fear, yet he could not move to interrupt it. La comtesse was conversing with him in a low tone; promising all her means and appliances to bring Henriette to their wishes, but mentioning, as courteously as possible, her rejection.
"She fears a dissimilarity of tastes," she said, by way of pallia-

tive-not a word of age and want of respect for him. He looked

stern and vindictive, yet his words were all courtesy.

"Oh, Madame la comtesse," he exclaimed, "by what right could I expect a divine creature like Mademoiselle de Rouvray to love or marry me? Love and marriage are not quite identical, I confess: either way would have contented me. With the attention that I would have shown, one might, however, have followed the other." He glanced uneasily at the brother and sister.

"You may depend upon my doing my-

"Let us break off for the present," he cried. "Madame, I feel assured of your kindness: on that I rely. But more on myself," he mentally added; then continued aloud, "It is a painful subject,

let us drop it. I sincerely thank you."

He rose as he spoke, to join the others. At that moment Edgar was announced. La comtesse could not refuse him admission in the evening. His entrance changed the scene. Paula quitted her mother's side, (whom she had been endeavouring to initiate into the mysteries of a knitted purse,) to meet him. Henri, gently waving his sister aside, did the same; and presently those four, so suited in age, were grouped together round the piano. Somehow Henri evidently did not seek the general, as he had lately been accustomed to do: he appeared rather to avoid him. How joyous his sister became as she observed this: she whispered her discovery to Paula, who at once opened the page of her music book, at a trio which only Henri and her sister could sing with her. However, Edgar would join in, and though possessing a good voice, singing was not one of his accomplishments; and

more than once they paused to laugh at some error on his part. Henri seemed to have forgotten his cause of yexation, whatever it might be, in their joy, which reminded him of the past happy time at des Ormes; and his rational cheerfulness brought light to Henriette's eye and gladness to her heart.

Long and often she remembered the few hours of that happy evening, and the hopes which had arisen of his return to them, again their light-hearted brother: for though present, the general did not approach, but sat conversing with the two elder ladies by

the fireside.

Was it policy that withheld him? Was it an indescribable feeling that his place was not amongst that innocent group? innocent-for although faulty, poor Henri's heart was good and

The clock on the mantelpiece struck the hour of departure for

guests.

"To-morrow, at twelve, Rue Jacob," whispered Edgar to Paula,

pressing her hand.

Madame de Rouvray had called Henriette's attention to her for a moment. Turning, she beheld the general in close conversation with her brother; but few words passed, and he, more hateful than ever, withdrew. Her heart trembled at the cold, sinister glance he gave her, when wishing "good night."

Henri looked sad again, but stooping, kissed his sister's cheeks.
"And maman?" asked Henriette. "I forgot," he said; then going up gaily, he embraced his mother and aunt, but there was

gloom visible under his assumed liveliness.

"One would fancy I had a sad journey before me," he said, "from these pathetic adieux, There-bon soir, every one," and quitted the salon.

As Henriette followed to her room she saw him enter his. .

"Henri!" she cried.

He was absorbed in thought, and did not hear her. Entering, he closed, but did not shut the door-she paused a moment hesi-

"I will wait," she said to herself, "and when Amélie is dismissed and all quiet, I will creep to his room; I must see him,

and know all."

So saying, she entered her apartment. Amélie was there awaiting her. She was one of those who never forget her rôle de soubrette. As she undressed her mistress, it was a string of exclamations.

"Oh! the beautiful hair!" she exclaimed, in affected rapture, as the golden shower fell below Henriette's waist, in waving loveliness. "Oh! the exquisite neck, it is living marble! and what an

"Hush!" cried Henriette, listening, "I thought I heard a step

in the corridor. Look out, Amélie."
She did so. "It is nothing," was the reply, as she returned, "there is nothing there; this is a very old house; the boards always creak at night."

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At length her toilette was completed for the night, and with un-

speakable pleasure, she dismissed Amélie.

Listening to the receding footsteps of the soubrette, she hastily half-dressed herself, and putting on a large shawl over her dressing-gown, listened again for a few moments. Cautiously opening her door, she looked out—all was still. A pale night-lamp burnt in the corridor: not a sound was there.

"I will speak to him, and know all!" she exclaimed. "He must

be saved. I feel some danger threatens him."

Gently closing her door, she crept down the passage, and her light step gave no echo; arrived at Henri's door, she lightly tapped—there was no answer. Pushing it open, it was unlatched. She entered—the room was empty. Henri had evidently thrown himself dressed on the bed; but now the place was vacant.

She almost staggered to her own apartment, and again the wakeful ear listened, and heard the heavy step return—with day-

light!

CHAPTER XIX.

SHE rose unrefreshed from a feverish sleep. What could be done? She was firmly resolved that all that could, should be effected. But how? The hateful Amélie was there, watching every turn in her anxious face, not with that look of interest which attachment wears, but with low servile curiosity.

Her simple toilette completed, she decided on first consulting Manette: that faithful creature might advise her for the best.

Amélie detested the other waiting-woman, as it was perhaps natural that she should; for the impure could not harmonize with that honest nature. Consequently she looked most indignant when she was desired to call Manette to her mistress's room; still more so when Henriette expressed a wish to be left alone with her nurse.

The former related to her humble friend all the past.

"Ma fille," answered Manette, "I think you are alarming yourself unnecessarily. What can be the motive of Monsieur le Général? I don't like his face; I met him on the stairs with Monsieur Henri one day. But why lead him astray?

"That's what I ask myself, Manette. Yet why is Henri so altered? Why out till that hour in the morning? I am wearied

nearly to death with anxiety."

"Tell me what you wish done, mon enfant, and pauvre Manette will do it. I wish—I'm sure I do, sincerely—that le baron would come to Paris."

"So do I, indeed; but 'tis in vain hoping that. Meanwhile, all I can do will be to see Henri; but I must do so at once, before he leaves home. Go to his room, ma bonne, and tell him I must speak with him. I will then accompany you there."

Manette quitted her mistress, and, in doing so, nearly fell over

Amélie, who was evidently listening. In a few moments, the former returned, her countenance expressing much uneasiness. Not noticing Amélie's presence, she exclaimed,-

"He is not there, mon enfant—the bed not slept in. He has

changed his dress; the room is in disorder—but he's gone."

"Gone!" exclaimed Henriette. "Gone? and at this hour?" "I could have told mademoiselle that, had she asked me!" said Amélie, with a look of unmistakable exultation, "for Bastien told

me Monsieur de Rouvray came in at daylight, and left again in about an hour, à cheval.'

"On horseback!" ejaculated his sister. "Where could he be going? Go, Manette, go to Bastien, and the concierge. Make all inquiries."

The other hastened to obey, while the agitated girl paced her

room in agony.

"I have thought there was something strange in Monsieur Henri, for some days," observed Amélie, eyeing her mistress: "he seldom comes home till daylight, and last night, just before mademoiselle went to his door, after I left her room, I met Bastien, who told me monsieur had gone out."

Henriette paused suddenly in her walk, and stared at the

soubrette: the everlasting smile distorted her face.

Poor girl! she felt how her actions were watched, but she would not condescend to notice it. Amélie looked disappointed, as her mistress turned proudly away, and opening her door, listened anxiously for Manette.

"Well?" she cried, as the woman entered.

"'Tis all true, ma fille; but there-don't fret and worry. Bastien said Monsieur Henri remained but half an hour, and then went out in a different dress, the concierge says the same, and adds, that when Monsieur Henri entered, about five, he went round to the stables, and ordered his horse, on which he left half an hour afterwards, without his groom.'

"Thank you, Manette, thank you," cried Henriette, in a voice of deep emotion. "Now, go to my mother; but keep all from

her," she whispered "I must see my aunt."

She moved to the door.

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"Had I not better announce mademoiselle?" asked Amélie, hastily.

"I thank you, I will go direct, myself."

"But, mademoiselle," urged the other, trying to stop her; "Madame la comtesse is probably asleep, and she does not like early unannounced visits."

Henriette's calmness deceived her.

"Mademoiselle," she said, in a cold, haughty tone, using that appellation which seems so strange at first to English ears, from mistress to servant, yet which, in the manner of its delivery, implies immeasurable superiority; "permit me to judge for myself. I allow no servant to dictate to me. You will be good enough to remain here till my return;" and she left the room.

Amélie registered a vow of hatred and revenge. The truth is,

she had, early that morning, sought la comtesse, and detailed the events of the night, not forgetting the visit the sister had paid to her brother's room. Interrupted by Fanchette's entrance, she had not time to implore secrecy, on the plea of discovering more, and she now dreaded Henriette's being made acquainted with these facts by her aunt.

And so she was. Scarcely had she taken her seat beside her bed, when la comtesse commenced a severe lecture on the gross impropriety of young ladies running about passages, half-dressed, after midnight. Her niece knew whence the information had

been derived.

"I sought my brother, madame," she answered, quietly, "it was my duty. For the future—pardon me for disobeying your wishes—I shall do as my conscience dictates, openly, and spare Mademoiselle Amélie the trouble of being a spy on my actions."

"There never was a wretched woman so treated as I am!" almost whimpered la comtesse. "No one obeys me! I endeavour to make matches for you which would render you the envy of all Paris, and you refuse them; I am bearded in my own hôtel by a Monsieur Andriot's presence,—and now, because your brother, like all young men, will be a little gay, I am to be teased to death about it—my rest disturbed at this early hour—not ten o'clock! And permit me to say, mademoiselle, that I consider your conduct as most indelicate in a young lady; prying after your brother, as you do."

"But my dear madame, pray---"

"There, go," cried her aunt, indignantly, twisting round in bed, with her face to the wall; "go, I want to sleep. I'm sure it's enough to make one hideous, haggard, and old before one's time, to be so tormented. I never saw such behaviour!" And, sitting up in the bed, she bestowed sundry hard blows on the unoffending pillow, and then angrily dropped her head into the comfortable hole she had made for it.

Not another word could Henriette elicit from her; so rising, with a sigh, she quitted the room. As she closed the door, she heard her aunt's half-smothered tones uttering, "C'est insupport-

able! Quelle jeune fille mal élevée!"

CHAPTER XX.

HENRIETTE descended to the salle à manger. She almost dreaded lest Amélie might have taken some means of informing her mother of Henri's absence: there seemed so much of the demon in that woman's composition. However, a glance at her sister's countenance showed her that Paula, for one, was in ignorance. "Better leave her thus," said she; "it may only be my fears and imagination."

Madame de Rouvray shortly appeared.

"My dear child," she remarked, on seeing Henriette, "how pale you look! are you ill? You must be."

"I did not sleep well, maman dear," she answered; "and my

Alas, the poor head: how often it answers for the heart!

"A walk will do you good, Henriette," cried Paula, kindly;
"we will not go to Madame Lagrange to-day, if you choose."

"No, sister dear; go, but not with me. I know maman and

you will forgive me, but I shall be better at home."

After much urging, they consented to her remaining behind, with a promise that if she felt better she would come to them with Manette. She could not for the world have left home in the state

of uncertainty that was agitating her.

Breakfast over, the others prepared for their visit to the artist's. Henriette would have given much to see Edgar and confide in him, but she durst not do so; she had only Manette; and when her mother and sister had departed, she was just leaving the room to seek her, when she thought she heard Bastien introducing some one into the salon: she listened a moment—yes, the door closed. "Should she go and see ?" Her heart failed her—she dreaded she scarcely knew what.

The man opened the door of the salle à manger: it was a small room adjoining the salon where they dined, when en famille. "Mademoiselle," he said in a whisper, "Monsieur le Général de la Valerie wishes to see you alone." She could only bow her head: she felt her lips quiver. "Alone!" she muttered, as Bastien with-drew, "alone! why?" And she crept to the salon door.

Near the fireplace stood the general: he bowed low as she

entered.

"I trust," he began, "I see Mademoiselle de Rouvray well? Good heavens," he cried, moving hastily towards her, "you are ill! faint! allow me to call your maid."

"No," she whispered, sinking into a chair, "I shall be better

presently. Where's where's Henri?" she gasped at last.

"Pray tranquillize yourself, mademoiselle," and he drew a chair beside her, "he will be here soon."

"Why not now? why have you come alone? Pray tell me all

the worst."

"Nay, you alarm yourself unnecessarily." He attempted to take her hand, but she withdrew it, and grasped the arm of the chair. "You are perhaps aware," he said, banishing the scowl which for a moment crossed his brow, "that de Rouvray left home early this morning?"
"Yes, oh yes!-on horseback."

"Well then, the fact is—there, don't alarm yourself, there is no danger, but last evening your brother foolishly got into a quarrel, and this morning met his adversary, who has wounded him. It is slight,—only slight, I assure you." This time he took her hand, for she was powerless to prevent him. She clung to her chair; drops of intense agony were forced from her eyes. "Where is he?" she whispered at last, rising, but staggering as she did so.

"I guessed something of this: oh, Henri, my brother, my own brother," and she dropped again on her seat.

This man had come to triumph over a victim, but her deep

affliction touched even him.

"I swear to you," he cried, "de Rouvray is not seriously hurt: he is wounded in the arm, nothing more."

"Oh! take me to him," she exclaimed, sobbing aloud, and with

clasped hands, "at once—anywhere. Oh! take me."
"He will be here, mademoiselle, I assure you, in a few moments; he is in my carriage, with a surgeon-pray calm yourself."

But for some moments he spoke in vain. She covered her face, and sobbed, as though her heart would break. Struggling with her emotion, she asked at last:

"Where did this occur, monsieur? and why?"

"Oh, what signifies where or why?—Well then, au Bois; the why, words at play."

"Play?" sheexclaimed, hastily, "play? At Frascati's, was it not?"

"You have guessed correctly.

"But it may be more dangerous than you say, or know," and she sprang wildly up, endowed with fresh energy. "I will gobut whither? Oh heavens!" And she covered her eyes, shuddering, and sank into her seat. "On my honour," cried the general, trying to take her hand once more, "his wound is slight."
"But whose the fault?" she exclaimed, with a forced calm, and

with bitterness; "yours, monsieur. Why have you led him to

that dreadful place f"

"If we," he coldly said, "reckoning on our superiority of years, assumed to ourselves the right of Mentors to every wild and foolish boy, we should have enough to do! Over your brother you have denied me the right to exercise authority. Were he mine, which he might now be, or nearly so, it would be different. He would go; I did not prevent him. We must purchase experience; his outlay as yet has been but small—a grazed arm and the loss of a few hundreds."

She looked up. "Do you mean," she asked, tremblingly, "that

he has lost hundreds at play ?"

"Why yes, I believe so-a trifle; some fifteen, there or there-A fiendish smile passed over his features; he dreamed that the fly was already entangled in his web.

"Poor boy! poor boy!" she cried, "how can he pay even that?" "Oh! that would be easily arranged; one word from you, and

his liabilities should be mine: that is-

"Do you imagine, Monsieur le général," and she rose with proud energy, "that my brother, a de Rouvray, would lie under an obligation to any man?"

"No, not to a stranger, but to your husband he might."

"And can you hope for an instant that I would marry the man who has led my brother astray? He was innocent, thoughtless of wrong, till he knew you. You have thrown open a gate of iniquity and temptation to him, of the existence of which he knew nothing.

No. I would sooner die-sooner would I see him die-than be your wife." She moved towards the door. Before she had reached

it he took her arm.

"Would you rather see him dishonoured? his name branded as a defaulter? He dare not ask his aunt: even if he durst, she would not aid him, still less would his father. You see I know all." and he glared upon her.

For a moment she stood cold and trembling, then uttering a

wild cry of joy, exclaimed, looking upwards,—
"Saved, Henri! my own Henri! I can save you yet!" Then turning coldly on the astonished man her streaming eyes, she added, scornfully, "not lost yet, monsieur, not yet; I have the means and can and will rescue him." And with a firm step she quitted the salon.

As she did so, the noise of a carriage slowly entering the courtyard met her ear. She started: in her anguish at the last information she had forgotten the first-his wound. She leaned against the wall—the door behind her opened: she paid no attention to that, for every nerve was strained to catch the coming sounds:

her distended eyes were fixed on the stairs.

Tramp—tramp—tramp, came the heavy footsteps upstairs—there were voices in loud lamentation. The general stood beside her, but she did not even see him; he spoke, but the ear was closed to sense. Every faculty was in her strained eyes. She could not move—she, usually so full of energy in trouble. A form rushed past her: she did not even recognise Manette, but her ear was now awakened to the loud, agonizing cry, as that poor creature threw her arms round her boy! And now Henriette saw him; she saw the pale, cold face, as two men carried him towards where she stood! The eyes were closed, and the blood was dropping in heavy gouts on the polished floor, even through his stained bandages. Not a cry burst from her, but before the general could catch her, she fell forward in a fainting-fit.

When she recovered, she found herself on her bed, Manette leaning over her with streaming eyes. Hours elapsed before she could recollect her cause of suffering; but when she did, a wild cry burst from her—it seemed like a summons to one in another

"Henri!" she shrieked, "Henri, my brother, my own brother!" and she fell weeping on the neck of her mother, who stood beside her. And Paula, too, was there, poor sobbing Paula—it was her first taste of real suffering. With gratitude Henriette learned that her brother was not dangerously wounded. The left arm was much shattered, but the surgeons pronounced the patient in no danger, if all excitement were avoided. He was evidently suffering mentally—that might lead to evil results. None knew the cause of the duel. Madame la comtesse had been closeted with the general, who could not enlighten her. She was almost frantic, so she said, but it was a perfectly convenable anguish. She tore no hair, shed no tears, and yet, for her, she felt it much. But her toilet was soignée as ever, rouge and pearl-powder had done their duty towards her, and assured that no danger was

apprehended, she said.

"We must not too rigorously inquire into the cause of young men's quarrels; it might not be prudent. Monsieur le général most kindly acted as his friend: we cannot sufficiently praise his unvarying attention to Henri."

The poor mother looked ten years older in her grief. It had stricken her severely, and Paula wept like an infant. At length

she tenderly said to Henriette,

"Try, dearest, to rise, and lean on me; poor Henri asks incessantly for you."

And the bewildered girl rose and tottered to his room.

CHAPTER XXI.

It will now be necessary to devote a few words to a description

of le Général de la Valerie.

He was one of those men of demoniacal heart that sought and found delight in the baser passions of his nature alone. Possessed of an immense fortune, he entered the army; there was room there and place to pursue his observations. Money he little cared for, as an end, and yet he worshipped it, as opening so many prospects of vice to his view. Gambling had been a science with him; no motive of pleasure urged him to the gaming table; it was his deliberate resort, for where could he have found a wider field for his survey? On women he had ever looked with utter contempt; he had little feeling or fancy for them. By him they were all classed as marketable commodities—"for sale."

Unfortunately, his experience had supplied him with too much reason for this degrading estimate. For years he had been eagerly sought: courted by the noble and lovely alike for his rank and wealth. Where others were coldly received, he was ever

welcomed, and the youngest and fairest smiled on him.

The first night he beheld Henriette, there was something so pure, so seraphic in her appearance, that he—even he—felt as he never had felt before. He rose from the card-table, where he had seen her pass, saying to himself,

"That is the only girl I ever saw whom I could call my wife, whom I could respect, should the mind correspond with the

face.

He was a physiognomist. Suspecting her to be Madame de Cressy's niece, he made himself acquainted with the fact. The rest has been shown, except the motive of the general in seeking and attaching her brother to himself. La comtesse was very fond of a touch of sentiment, and a spice of sensibility in a woman; it made her appear interesting. She had expatiated on the bond of union between the twins, of their love for each other, of Henriette's devotion to Henri. On this the general built his plans

It was like seething a kid in its mother's milk. From the first day, he saw that Henriette looked coldly on him. He had expected it: he read it in her pure look. She was not one to whom personal aggrandizement could be tendered as a price. However, she might be brought to sacrifice herself to preserve another.

Her first refusal of the general's advances was too decided to leave him any hope, except what might be created from the variable mind of a woman. He watched her keenly; she cared for no one. He had failed in detecting her love for Edgar, even though still, the young heart's beatings at his approach made her

tremble.

"No, she cares for no one," was his thought: the less chance for him, since it seemed her dislike towards him was a positive feeling, not a reflection of the light from another. A more pressing motive induced him to precipitate his plans—the constant dread in which he existed that from day to day her disengaged affections might fix themselves on some one else.

"I will secure her yet!" he said, mentally, "and her weak

brother shall be the bait."

He dexterously made himself acquainted with the family affairs, through Henri and the comtesse. He was most careful in his interview with the latter, to avoid even a hint as to where Henri's quarrel had taken place; steadily denying ever having seen him touch a card or die. He feared she might release him from his embarrassments, though she had declared he should at once return to his father, if she ever heard of his gambling.

Henri dismissed, all his designs would be irremediably frustrated. Henriette unconsciously furthered his scheme by her silence towards every one, touching her brother having lost at play. Hugging himself upon his well-laid plans, we may imagine the general's great surprise and uneasiness at her exclamation,

"Henri, Henri, I will and can save you yet!"

And now we will accompany the two sisters to their brother's room.

Noiselessly they crept into that room of mental and bodily suffering. Manette, the ever-wakeful in affection for those children, sat by his bedside, but spoke little, though the eye seldom

quitted his face.

The surgeon had ordered strict quiet, but who might bring that boon to the agitated mind? The restless eyes wandered round and round that room, counting every line and pattern on the paper, numbering every festoon in the hangings of his feverish bed; then they would pause a while on the door. When the door opened, and his second self and Paula entered, the eye lost its vacant stare, and the arm—the one he could raise—was stretched forth.

They are on their knees beside him. Henriette could not utter a word; she was choking down the rising tears and sobs lest they should agitate him; but taking that hand in both of hers, the trembling lip covered it with kisses. Paula wept unrestrainedly, but he did not notice her; his eye, his whole soul was fixed on

her sister.

There was another witness to that scene: the door was aiar.

and Amélie's cold, sinister face peeped in.

"Don't fret, Henny," whispered he, using the abbreviation he generally employed in addressing her in their lighter moments: I shall soon be well; it is an ugly smash, but the doctor has set it. I am in no pain, dear," and even while he spoke the brow contracted with a pang beyond his power to conceal.

The shattered arm lay in its many bandages outside the bed-

clothes, a dead weight.

"Is it much hurt?" whispered Henriette at last of Manette.

The other bowed her head.

"Not broken, is it?" she uttered, scarcely audibly.

Again Manette bent her head affirmatively.

"In two places," whispered Paula, sobbing, "but—but they have set it, and the doctor says"—here the poor little head dropped in anguish on the bed once more

"Hush, darling!" said Manette, trying to raise and soothe her, "you will flurry him. See how quiet she is, pauvre ange!"

and she pointed to Henriette. It was true; that girl, choking with emotion which impeded

her utterance, was in outward seeming calm, but the lip quivered pale as death, and the trembling knees clung to the floor; she

would have fallen had she attempted to rise.

Another figure glided into the room—his mother. We have said that years seemed suddenly to have been added to her life. She shed not a tear; her face was very pale. She glided like a spectre into the apartment, and noiselessly as one, seated herself at the foot of the bed, gazing on Henri in mute terror: there was heartrending despair in her look.

His mind was beginning to wander; he had lost much blood, not alone from the arm, but from his side, which the ball had traversed. His strength had been sufficient to enable him to watch for Henriette's coming; but now, the tension of that strain removed.

his energy gave way.

"Ma revanche!" he cried, holding up his arm as though he still held the dice; "ma revanche! ten, twelve, fifteen hundred louis." And he laughed aloud.

"Hush!" cried his sister, grasping his arm. She dreaded Paula's learning the truth; whatever she herself might suffer, no additional sorrow must be cast upon her. She had not seen her mother enter.

"He repeated this before you came," whispered Manette;

"what-oh, what can he mean?"

"Hush! again pleaded Henriette; and she glanced at Paula.
"Dishonoured! branded!" he muttered between his teeth,
but not a coward he shouted, for I defied him."

"Henri, in mercy's name," cried his elder sister struggling to her feet, and clasping her arms round his neck; "be calm; don't you know us? See how poor little Paula is weeping, and Manette. In mercy's name be calm."

"Who are you?" he cried, pushing her back. "Go! I never

wish to see you again. Oh! Arsène," and his voice trembled: "was it well or rightly done to lead me into their hands?"

Manette looked at the elder sister: there was a volume of mean-

ing in that look.

'Not Arsène, Henri, not any one but your own loving, true

sister. Do. dearest, be calm-I beg, I beseech you."

"Hush!" cried Manette, going hastily to the door, and closing it, after first looking out. "Amélie," she whispered, pointing towards it.

Exhausted by his emotion, Henri lay still as death on the pillow. "Paula," whispered her sister, "Paula, dearest." She looked or "Go write a line to Edgar; Manette will take it. Tell him to come, and quickly. I dare not leave him, and I have much to

do. Besides Edgar ean advise me."

"But my aunt," whispered Paula: "she will not allow Edgar to come early; Bastien would not admit him."

"Go to her, darling, say I implored it—that Henri would like to

see him." Paula left the room.

We will precede her to la comtesse's apartment. Cold as she was, the shock had been great to her. Above all she loved Henri; but then, when assured by the general that the broken arm was a mere trifle, she felt delighted not to know it to be an obligation upon her to feel and look miserable. He had hinted as delicately as possible, that the quarrel was about a woman, so of course delicacy dictated to her to notice the whole affair as little as might be.

It was nearly the hour of dinner, and Amélie had just reported the scene in Henri's room, and the small chance existing of any one

dressing or even thinking of dinner.

"It is really scandalous," cried her mistress, "the manner in which I am treated! Not the least respect shown me; no regard for my wretched feelings; no one to cheer me! I am sure it is shameful."

"Ah! madame la comtesse, the kindest hearts are always those that are the most imposed upon!" and Amélie sighed with well-

assumed feeling.

"And do you mean to say, Amélie, that both my nieces and

their foolish mother are in Monsieur Henri's room?"

"Yes, madame, and they have agitated him to such a degree, that, weak as he is from loss of blood, he has become quite light-headed, and says all sorts of strange things. He mistook mademoiselle for some person whom he called Arsène, and offered her fifteen hundred louis!

"Gracious heavens!" exclaimed la comtesse. "he must be mad indeed! and what a dreadful thing for my nieces to hear! quite enough to corrupt their morals. But I will put a stop to this; he shall have a sick-nurse, and no one shall enter his chamber but—"

Her hand was on the bell to summon her own attendant, when Paula rapped at the door. Amélie opened it, and felt not a little ashamed as her young mistress entered. Poor girl, her eyes were swollen with crying.

"Eh, ma foi!" exclaimed her aunt, "what have you been about,

child? pray look at your eyes; you are quite a fright!"

"Poor Henri," she said, almost sobbing as she mentioned his name, "is so ill, ma bonne tante," she said this coaxingly, "and would like to see Edgar."

She hesitated; Amélie cast up her eyes behind her back, but in

view of la comtesse.

"May I-send-for-him-please?" It was as the prayer of a

child.

"Send for Monsieur Andriot?" cried her aunt, drawing herself
up; "and why, pray, must I have my hotel filled with strangers?
Have I not servants enough to attend on your brother?"

"He does not require servants, more than he has, madame, but a friend—a brother." She spoke almost with dignity, checking her

tears.

"Monsieur Andriot was not such a particular friend of my nephew's, when he was well, that he should desire his society now;

it is an excuse to facilitate your interviews."

"I never condescend to excuses," answered Paula; "I see Edgar without them; but my poor brother would like to see him, I know. Pray let him come." Her voice sank to a gentle entreaty; her aunt was almost moved to grant her petition; but catching a sinister smile on Amélie's face, she became cold and stern.

There is no worse tyranny than that which is exercised by a

servant over a mistress.

"I insist," replied la comtesse, haughtily, "that Monsieur Andriot, when he calls as usual, shall be received in the salon, and in no other apartment in my hotel; and I also insist, mademoiselle, on your remaining in your own room, or my salon, as you ought to do, and not in monsieur mon neveu's room. It is not correct, and I will not permit it."

All Paula's pride, and she had not a little, was roused.

"Madame," she replied, and the pale cheek flushed, and the eye lightened—" as regards Edgar,—my fiance though he be—I cannot do more than entreat; but with respect to Henri, while my mother countenances my sitting with him, you must pardon me, but I shall do so! Poor Henri, my poor brother, to be left to a garde malade. I would sooner sit up with him night and day myself."

La comtesse looked petrified. Paula, the mere child, to speak

thus!—she was speechless.

"Will mademoiselle dress for dinner?" asked Amélie, smiling. "I shall not change my dress to-day," she replied, coldly, "if, madame," she addressed her aunt, "will pardon my morning one; if not, I will remain in my own room, but I cannot dress."

"As you please," returned her aunt, under her breath, in deep

indignation.

Paula merely answered, "I thank you, madame," and left the room, leaving her aunt in uncertainty as to whether she was to have their company or not, in the salon.

"Go and find out, Amélie," she said, almost whimpering, "for

it is wretched dining alone."

Amélie departed. She had completely subjected the comtesse to her will by her cringing manner, and a continual fund of gossip. She was that worst devil—a domestic spy.

CHAPTER XXII.

LA COMTESSE entered the salon with her usual hauteur; and, much as she was gratified at seeing her nieces there, even in their morning dresses, she would not suffer her pride to acknowledge it. She even felt not quite at ease about her harsh refusal to allow Edgar to visit Henri; but the same pride forbade her to withdraw her command. Her heart, though cold, was not really bad, but she was under the dominion of an insinuating fiend, who played

on all her weakest points for her own purposes.

Madame de Rouvray would not leave her son's apartment. The girls had come down, not from an inclination to do so, but from a feeling that it was due to their aunt. This was explained by Henriette. Paula, however, would have braved all—but then, despite her grief, she longed to see Edgar. It is indeed in sorrow we most cling to one we love. Henriette, strange to say, was desirous of an interview with the general; she thought he would probably come in that evening, and she wished to question him further touching her brother's losses at play.

In this she was doomed to be disappointed. He merely called at the *concierge's*, and sent up his card, with inquiries after Henri's health. He had become more tranquil before dinner, which enabled

his sisters to leave him without uneasiness.

Edgar was in a wretched state of mind when he was told of Henri's duel and its consequence. Paula herself had only known it on her return from Madame Lagrange's with her mother that

morning.

The evening passed sadly enough. La comtesse was dreadfully annoyed at the affair, for they had been engaged to a splendid entertainment that evening at Madame de Verneuil's, and it was impossible to go. Then Edgar saw how vain it would be to expect Paula to sit for her portrait, while her brother was so ill; thus half his time with her was abridged. This was her aunt's consolation—they could not meet so often.

"And I'm going in a week, Paula," whispered he, as he leaned over her frame, "but promise me you will have the likeness taken, and sent me." It needed little persuasion to gain that assurance.

Madame la comtesse was evident annoyed by the non-appearance of her pet general; especially as conversation between herself and Henriette was carried on in monosyllables. The latter was plunged deep in thought; only from Henri could she hope to discover the amount of his losses, and with him alone could she consult about the plan she proposed for the liquidation of them.

The general had his reasons for staying away. After the first

shock of surprise, he felt convinced that Henriette had either been playing a part, or that she had mistaken her power of cancelling her brother's debt. Henri had been so candid with him as to his affairs, that the other was certain he had no means of his own of paying the debt. It was true, Henri had been perfectly plainspoken relative to his father's allowance, and his refusal to increase it; but he had never either dreamed of, or deemed it necessary to inform the general of the meagre legacy left by his godmother.

"If I go to-night, it may seem too anxious, too friendly!" mused the general. "She may expect too much from my friendship,—I must be wary and distant: she shall come to me—she must!" In this assurance, however, he was wrong.

The doctor returned in the evening. Henri was feverish, but

not so excited as he had been during the day.

Manette would not hear of a garde malade for her child.

"What, a paid nurse," she cried, "and I here? oh no!" and so

she took her place at his bedside for the night.

The next morning Henri was low and weak; the fever had much abated, and left him more composed and thoughtful; yet at times he was uneasy, and evidently suffering from a fearful depression of spirits. After breakfasting in her own room, la comtesse, followed by Amélie, came in state to inquire after her "dear nephew."

Not even that woman's presence could quite check her emotion, when she beheld him; he was so pale and altered, in a few hours. The meeting was one of kindness on both sides, for Henri really loved her, and wild and reckless himself, he did not feel the want of that genial warmth in her which another might have experienced.

"Would you like to see any one, mon neveu?" she asked; ce bon

général will, I dare say, call in the course of the day."

"No! not him." he cried, hurriedly; "I do not wish for any visitors—they irritate me."

"Is there no one else you would like to see, Henri?" asked his

"Oh, yes," he answered, "Edgar, I have seen little of him lately," and he sighed.

"If you are unable to see the good, kind general," observed his aunt, coldly, "I am sure the soldatesque manners of Monsieur

Andriot will not suit you; I must prohibit it."

Paula was about to reply; Henriette withheld her. "Do not irritate her," she whispered. Henri was too weak to urge his will further. Madame le comtesse sailed away in all her dignity. The sick-room, even of one she loved, was an atmosphere she dreaded; it reminded her of death, when la Comtesse de Cressy, with all her wealth, and her escutcheons, would be as nought! Paula, at her sister's instance, left, to write to her father, and relate the fact of Henri's duel as leniently as possible.

La comtesse left home rather early on a round of visits. Henriette had succeeded in partially tranquillizing her mother's spirits, and having left her awhile in Manette's care, she gently crept into

her brother's room.

She found him restless and perturbed; his arm pained him much, and again, the mind was more ill at ease. He started when she entered, and looked alarmed.

"Ah! Henny," he said, in a faint voice, but evidently relieved at seeing who was his visitor; "I feared it was some-stranger."

he added, hesitatingly.

"Stranger, dear, who should come here?"

"I don't know; I thought-"

"You thought it was the general, did you not?"

He did not reply, but looked down.

"I want you, Henri, my own dear brother," and she seated herself on the edge of the bed, and put her arm round his neck, "to tell me all; there, don't look so sad; believe me, I bring hope, or I would not probe your wound thus.

"Hope?" he cried, gazing into her eyes, "What hope can there

be? What do you know?"

"All, I think, dear: you have lost a large sum; now tell me about it?"

"Who is your informant, Henny?" he cried, with afrown,

earnestly looking at her; "Is it the general?" She hesitated a moment, then answered, "Yes."

"Has that man ever proposed to you?" he asked; "Answer me truly? was it vesterday?"

"He has proposed; but," she hastily added, seeing his frown.

"before vesterday. Some days since."

"Are you sure, Henny?" "Certain, oh, most certain."

"I know you refused him; you did?"

"Yes, Henri, at once."

"Then," he said, thoughtfully, "I did him injustice—at least, I think so.

"Why did he speak of my losses ?" he again asked, suspiciously.
"Oh, to—consult with me about them," she replied, with some hesitation.

"Well, that was kind, at all events."

She reserved it to some future day to undeceive him, fearful of exciting him too much.

"And about those losses, Henri; what are they?"

"Oh, I cannot bear to think," he answered, in a hurried, wild manner; "I know not what to do. It is more those than this." and he touched his arm, "that trouble me. I am ruined, Henriette, for they will brand me as a defaulter; and how am I to take up my IO U?"

"What is that, darling?" she asked, innocently. "Oh, well,-my bill for fifteen hundred louis.

"Have you forgotten, Henri," and she looked almost smilingly in his face, "our little fortune, of which we have the entire control-that will more than pay it."

He started and looked at her, while a deep blush covered his

brow.

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"Thought?" he answered, "yes, I have thought of my share,

but that will not pay it; and do you think I would take yours-

your all, dear girl, to pay debts like these?"

"You have been seduced into play, my brother, and little as I know of those matters, I know you must in honour pay such debts."

"But not with your money, Henriette! No," he continued, indignantly, "never! they may post me—brand me—do as they will—but not one sou of your money do they receive from me."

"There, brother—there," she exclaimed, soothingly, "not another word; let us speak of something else. I will not offer mine again, but let me write for yours to my father. You can pay part; that will ease your mind. Shall I?

"That I will gladly do," he cried. "Poor dear Henny, she always comes to comfort me. It will be a relief." And he sighed heavily

as the weary head dropped on the pillow.

"You cannot write a letter, so I will, and you can sign it. I will explain to my father. But—but what shall I say? what excuse can I make?"

"Oh! none," he cried, with momentary impetuosity; I owe no explanation to him; he has never consulted my happiness in any

way. Say I want it."

"You are wrong, Henri, to speak thus; but I will not lecture you now. Tell me how all this occurred—how you came to fight? That was very wrong,—only think, dear, if you had killed any one,—what a dreadful thing!"

"I almost wish I had," he muttered, between his teeth.

"Hush! my brother, hush!" and she pressed her hand on his outh.

"I scarcely know," he said, gently withdrawing it, "how it occurred. The fact is, I had lost more than I could afford to lose, three nights ago."

"At that horrid place, Fras-"

"Yes," he interrupted. "But it is an alluring place, Henriette: my aunt is wrong when she says all the worst go there; those are her old-fashioned notions; the best society in Paris is there at night. Well, I returned the evening before last to retrieve those losses, if possible. I had given my note of hand for the amount, I lost more—more—and to the last man to whom I would owe an obligation for an hour's delay, in repayment. The general was at another table; I had no ready money; and I was playing with the Comte de Brèges, a man I detest. When I found myself so heavy a loser, I claimed my 'revanche.' No,' he said, rising, 'Monsieur has already had it.' It only remained then for me to pay him. I could but tender him my I O U for the sum, which galled me to the soul. I had been dining out, and drank somewhat too freely; and something had been hinted about you to the general, which irritated me. I feared the influence of others over you, Henny. I like la Valerie as an acquaintance; he is a most agreeable one; but heaven forbid I should see you his wife—it would be sacrilege!"
"Amen to that prayer, Henri."

He pressed her hand, and continued,—

"I was disposed to quarrel; I said before, I detest de Brèges."

"Why? we do not hate without reason."

"Oh, never mind, I cannot tell you why, but I hate him, and he returns my hatred with interest. When I offered the IOU. he took it scornfully, saying, as he did so,-"

"'When you want papillottes for your hair, Arsène, come to

me; this waste paper will do for them."

"Arsène!" cried his sister, starting. "Who is Arsène? You called me that name yesterday, when your mind wandered."

He turned crimson.

"Did I?" he said, hastily. "I forgot; I should not have named her to you. I forgot myself; forget it too, Henny." He paused.

"And—?" she asked with earnestness.

"Oh! you may guess the rest," he hurriedly replied. "I flew at his throat and defied him. I think I should have strangled him, but for -

He paused again, then added,—

"La Valerie came up, and acted most kindly towards me. I was wrong to allow a suspicion of bad motives on his part to creep into my mind, for he at once sided with me. The meeting was arranged for yesterday at seven: he tried hard to prevent it, but when it became inevitable, he took up the IOU on the table, and said :--

"De Rouvray, as you go out to-morrow, it is best to settle this little affair. I will give the Comte de Brèges my cheque, and you can afterwards arrange this with me." He did so, and it was a relief to me not to be for an instant in de Brèges's debt."

"Then the general holds this bond?" asked Henriette, thoughtfully.

"Yes, until I can repay it."

"All, Henri? Is he the only creditor? Are these fifteen hundred louis all you owe?"

"Yes, the fifteen hundred. Heaven knows where I shall get

the five from-I much wish to pay the general."

"Well, you can soon pay a part, so don't fret. And now I will write the letter, which you must sign. I must think of something to tell my father."

She stooped, and fondly embracing her brother, left the room. She had ascertained what she had been so anxious to know.—

namely, in whose possession the bond was.

CHAPTER XXIII.

As the Abbé de Brissac descended the stairs, after leaving the party he had met at Madame Lagrange's, he fell into a deep reverie. He felt much and strangely interested in them all. He. the priest and man of discernment, saw too plainly that a more than ordinary sorrow preyed on Madame de Rouvray's mind. It

was not a mere curiosity on his part, but a wish, if possible, to alleviate those sorrows by raising the veil that covered them, and beneath which they rankled like an imperfectly healed wound, and while so doing, to speak comfort to one who was suffering. He looked in that mild and gentle face, and not one thought of sin, of a deeper dye than such as is common to frail human nature, entered into his contemplation.

There was something, too, in Henriette's placid brow, which, if it spoke of peace now, told—or at least suggested—a tale of trials;

yet what trials could have stricken one so fair and young?

Of Paula, too, he thought; but presently he was tempted to ask in what relation Edgar, a curé's nephew, stood to these high-born girls? Again, Paula remembered him! strange that not a word of recognition had passed! and why? He had done no wrong in addressing her at the Mairie, nor she in replying; yet she was silent in words; but the look, how eloquent of memory! There was a tacitly-asked secrecy. Wherefore? It was strange! her duplicity jarred on the upright feelings of the man; he felt grieved, too, at his participation in the deceit. In this maze of thought he descended into the street.

The following day other duties prevented his revisiting Madame Lagrange. On the next, however, he had done so, and had learnt that Edgar was Paula's affianced husband; that her brother had been wounded in a duel, and that consequently their visits for

a while had been suspended.

The thought of the de Rouvray family pursued him, and when Madame la Comtesse de Cressy, on the afternoon of that day, entered Madame de Verneuil's salon, the first person she beheld was the abbé de Brissac. There, he was aware they were well known.

A crowd of persons was assembled, and he found himself far less at ease and happy than in Madame Lagrange's garret. However, he had a part to play—an end to gain; and when Madame de Cressy entered, he sought an opportunity of introducing the name of her relatives, and of inquiring about her nephew's state. Of the others he said little, beyond a hope that they were well.

He was a man to succeed almost in any aim it was his purpose to accomplish. Before he took his departure, he had received a pressing invitation from la comtesse, to call and see her. "Though," she added, "we may have our trifling differences of religious opinions, it would not prevent her, she trusted, from ranking among those she called friends, Monsieur l'Abbé de Brissac."

He bowed gracefully, and expressed the great pleasure he should

feel in being permitted to cultivate the friendship offered.

Nothing could exceed Madame de Cressy's delight. It was a glittering star in the horizon of her solon, to rank him, the much sought after, among her guests. Had his heart been open, even to his own knowledge of it, in all the beauty of uprightness, he need have sought no excuse for a natural pleasure in agreeable society; but there was an unacknowledged thought and wish in

his soul, upon which some officious spirit cast a veil—perchance

the better to betray him.

Henriette had undertaken, to her a most painful task, that of writing, as she was doing, to her father. This had ever been a task of great difficulty. She felt how little her affection for him was regarded.

How explain the desire to receive her little fortune, and Henri's? Nevertheless, it must be done; so, as briefly as possible, she asked him to allow her to claim it. On a separate sheet, she sent Henry's signature, stating his accident, and inability to write She could devise no excuse, but softened as much as possible the cause of his wound.

Henriette concluded, "she hoped her dear father would forgive him, and both their requests for their money, which would be

applied in a good cause.'

This she might conscientiously assert, since it would release Henri from a heavy obligation, and be the means, probably, of reclaiming him. The cause she sedulously avoided naming: nothing should make her divulge it; she had so much dread for Henri, if his gambling were known. La comtesse had also written, naming

his duel, and stating it to have been about some woman.

Soothed by his sister's assurance, of assistance, Henri became more calm, and with his tranquillity of mind all the feverish symptoms began to abate. In the evening of that day, leaving him in the care of Manette, the sisters, as usual, took their places in the salon. Madame de Rouvray, though not yet recovered from the shock she had received was more composed, and thus the hôtel had almost recovered the state of quietude in which the

reader found it when first we placed it before him.

No one had suffered more keenly in her way, during the last few days, than la comtesse. Before the arrival of her nieces and nephew, (her sister-in-law reckoned for nothing,) she had been in the habit of passing almost every evening in some gaiety; this, however, she had partially relinquished, not deeming it correct to drag them out too much; and the quiet social chat of a few friends at home had been a variety in her life of pleasure. Solitudeeven the solitude of an hour-was wretchedness to her, she required excitement and change: it was her existence. Everything wearies in its turn the mere pleasure-seeker, and fades and palls on the sense where there is no mental resource. There are moments when the physical powers refuse to obey the will, it is then that the mere votary of fashion feels her real solitude. How fearfully must the knell of each departing year sound in the vacant breast which has laid up no treasure to dwell upon when youth shall have passed away, and with it pleasure and the power of enjoyment; when the eye, too dim to read, cannot turn within itself, and peruse the pleasant thoughts and soft memories garnered up there!

With a feeling of real satisfaction, she once again saw the

young faces around her hearth.

Henriette was more talkative than usual: she seemed to wish to banish thought. a fearful dread was on her, of the result of her application to her father; she was reckoning the hours until he should receive her letter.

Paula was deeply engaged in a conversation with Edgar. She. poor girl, was reckoning the while how soon that pleasure would only be a memory.

They were thus respectively engaged when the general was announced. Henriette had felt so delighted that he had not come the previous evening. Then she had longed to see him, and inquire about Henri's affairs; now she knew all, and was free and inde-

pendent of his assistance.

He had remained away to further his own ends; for he thought she would seek him for information. Great was his surprise at her perfectly unconstrained manner; she seemed, too, in better spirits than usual. Even his perspicuity failed to perceive that a hidden and sedulously discouraged thought, contributed to the ease of her address. He was fairly puzzled.

"May I pay de Rouvray a visit?" asked he, at length.

"I fear it may disturb him, being so late, Monsieur le général,"

"Oh, nonsense," exclaimed la comtesse; "I am sure Henri will be delighted to see monsieur. Prayring for Bastien to show the way." "I am head nurse," Henriette replied, with an effort, and yet

forcing herself to seem tranquil and smiling, "and cannot allow too much conversation with my patient. Come, maman, and she pressed her mother's arm, and looked significantly in her face:

we will show Monsieur le général the way."
"Really, mademoiselle, I cannot permit such a condescension

on your part," he answered.

"Surely you will allow your brother to see his friends alone?" exclaimed her aunt: "this is most unprecedented behaviour;

Monsieur Andriot passed an hour with him this evening."

"True, madame," and she smiled blandly, "but then, you know Henri and Edgar have known each other from youth, and if my brother felt it an effort to converse, he would not hesitate in sending Edgar away. Now, he might feel gêné with Monsieur le général; so, with your permission, maman and I will go and keep the sick gentleman and the hale one in order." Her full eye met the general's; he read her whole soul full of suspicion and defiance in it. A dark scowl came over his brow as he followed them, and swore in his heart to be revenged.

Her aunt could not interfere more decidedly, since Henriette's mother accompanied her; but she was much annoyed; the more so that she saw there was something which, however, was incom-

prehensible to her.

Not a word in private could the general impart to Henri. Madame de Rouvray had previously been warned by her daughter, that they must not meet alone; and so accustomed had she become to Henriette's gentle guidance, that without question or inquiry she did as the other bade her.

The general took his leave shortly after their return to the salon. and, on shaking hands with Henriette, a courtesy she could not without observation avoid, he said, looking her full in the face,-

"A revoir, Mademoiselle de Rouvray; I thank you sincerely for your kind attention this evening. I shall not soon forget it. Be kind enough to say à revoir also to your brother from me: I omitted it when I was in his room."

"I shall not fail, Monsieur le général." And though she said

this calmly, she trembled at his tone and manner.

"He certainly is a delightful man," said la comtesse, as he left the room; "any one might feel proud of such a man's attentions." "Why, madame?" asked the literal and information-seeking

Paula.

"Why? because he has more cleverness and real wit than half

a dozen of your young men of the present day."

"For my part," said Paula, "I think we are always much hap-

pier when he's away; for, if a word is said to displease him, he looks daggers at once: daggers, did I say? no, a whole shop of blunt, jagged tools."

Madame gave an "Ahem!" of dissatisfaction. She had given up scolding the incorrigible Paula. Edgar soon afterwards departed.

and all adjourned to their rooms.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE day following was one of great relief to more than one in that hôtel. The general did not make his appearance. Henri was rapidly improving, and little Paula, at his earnest request, accompanied by her mother and Edgar, of course, went to Madame Lagrange's.

When her mother and Paula entered the salon on their return, they were not a little surprised to find, among a goodly number of visitors assembled, the Abbé de Brissac. He sat a little apart

from the rest of the company, conversing with Henriette.

"I may, then, hope to be presented to Monsieur votre frère?" he said, after somé previous conversation about him. "Authorized by Mademoiselle de Rouvray, I will venture to speak from the promptings of my conscience, against duelling. Sometimes the word of a stranger has more effect than that of a relative."

"No one is a prophet in his own country," she replied, "and I fear that applies more particularly to families. We are too prone to believe that some sinister motive actuates those who are nearest to us, when advice is offered. I do not," she hastily added, "apply this in my individual case, to Henri: he is all a brother should be."

As she spoke, Paula entered; her mother had gone to her own apartment. She was radiant in beauty, a rich colour was on her

cheek, and her face was lighted up with smiles.

. The abbé rose as she advanced towards where they sat. She

had not noticed them; a sudden chill passed over her countenance. He placed a chair beside her sister, and with a bow more reserved than she had ever given any one, she seated herself. He rose soon after her arrival, and bowing his adieux, quitted the salon, but not without a request from la comtesse, to see him soon, that he might lecture her naughty nephew.

Two days passed, and the general had not called.

On the third day came four letters to the hôtel from the Baron

de Rouvray. To Henriette he wrote with brevity:

"I cannot refuse what is your own; still less do I demand why you require it. Had you ever evinced the duty or affection of a daughter towards me, I might have requested an explanation; as it is, I send your money, feeling convinced that it will be applied to some improper purpose, which you are ashamed to own—some needless extravagance or expenditure."

She durst not give Henri the one to himself; it would inevitably speak of hers, so she did what, under no other circumstances, she would have done—she broke the seal. It was almost a copy of her own, mentioning her demand, and regarding, as an insult to him-

self, the withdrawal of their money from a father's hands.

She then sat down, and writing a letter to Edgar, briefly explained as much as was necessary of the affair, imploring a secrecy which she well knew would be rigidly observed, even to Paula; begging him also, without delay, to change the bills for cash. This done, she sent Manette, her sole confidante in the affair, with the letter. Hitherto all had gone well with her; Edgar was, unseen by Paula, to give her the money that evening.

"When I see my father," she said to herself, "I will assure him it was not an unworthy purpose. When Henri is settled in some

profession I will tell all.

Madame la comtesse sent for her, and in no measured terms upbraided her for her gross misconduct in withdrawing the sum from her father. And "where was the money to come from for her trousseau?"

"I must choose a husband first," she said, trying to smile, "my dear madame; and pray do not you blame me too, for I meet with anger from all, and I do not think I deserve it. My father is most

harsh in his supposition."

"Why, what can he suppose, but that you have done this to

annoy him? making your brother, too, do the same thing."

"IP" she exclaimed, "IP" then remembering herself, she added, "Some day, my dear aunt, you shall know all; meanwhile, reserve some kindness in your mind, in your judgment of me, and pray do not speak of this to Henri for a day or two; it would agitate him." All she required was time.

"And not to Paula?" she said, coaxingly. "No, pray; not to

Paula!"

"You are a mystery, ma nièce; but, since you desire it, no."
"Thank you, my dear madame, ma tante," and throwing her arms around her, and embracing her, she glided away, lighter at heart.
Another scene awaited her with her mother; not one of harsh-

ness or censure, but of prayers—only prayers. She would fain

have told her all, but durst not.

The evening came, and la comtesse, no longer able to bear the confinement, had gone to a soirée, after bitterly complaining of the want of all consideration for her, on the part of her nieces, who refused to leave home till Henri should be better.

When Henriette entered the salon, after paying a long visit to him, she found her mother, sister, and Edgar there. They all seemed composed and happy. He took an opportunity of convey-

ing into her hand a sealed letter.

"Henriette," he whispered, "much as I regret the cause, you could not have acted otherwise than you have done. I sincerely hope it may prove a severe lesson to Henri. Poor fellow! you are an angel, dear sister, and happy will be the man you love. But you look harassed, Henriette," he added, still holding her hand, which trembled in his, and gazing kindly in her face. "And why do you tremble so; are you not well?"

"Yes, well, quite well," she answered mechanically, and her suffused eyes turned toward the ground. "These events have un-

nerved me.'

"But you have been looking ill a long time, dear sister," and he fondly enclosed her hand in both of his; I told Paula so; you never look as you did the night we walked together beneath the elms. Do you remember it?

She raised her eyes to his. That one wild, agonized glance would have told all, had he not been blinded by his love for another. She uttered a few unintelligible words, and retired to her own room, there to commune with her heart.

Shortly after her return to the salon, the general was announced. Though he inquired with much seeming interest after Henri, he

did not even ask to see him, for which she felt delighted.

Henriette took an opportunity of soliciting the favour of an early interview on the morrow. He started, and his eye was fixed inquiringly on hers. What could it mean? He was lost in conjecture, for the truth never once flashed across his mind. He left the hôtel involved in a maze of doubt. To the evening succeeded the morning; and alone, waiting him in that salon, sat Henriette. Her mother had again accompanied Paula to Madame Lagrange's.

As the general entered, she rose to meet him. "I am here at your desire," he said, taking her hand before she could withdraw

it. "I am now, as ever, at your command."
"Monsieur de la Valerie," she replied seating herself; "pardon me the trouble I give you, but circumstances compel me to be my brother's agent. I believe you hold his bond for fifteen hundred louis. In that envelope," she tendered him one, "you will find that amount."

He almost sprang from his chair; his face had suddenly become—not livid, it was always so,—but black and fearful to

behold.

"The bond paid !- and by you?" he cried drawing back. "You mistake. Monsieur le général: the bond is paid by my brother. I am only his agent, as I before stated; he is unable himself to act in the business."

"But I cannot close this matter without seeing him, Mademoi-

selle de Rouvray."

"He could but do as I am doing—release himself from a debt which, though still leaving him under great obligation to you for all your kindness in the transaction, has heavily oppressed him."

Her words proved that she knew all of what he would fain have had her been in ignorance. To have declined to receive the money would have excited suspicions which he wished to allay, and he was without excuse for so doing. He therefore tore open the envelope, and the amount, in billets de banque, were disclosed to his view. With a strong effort he recovered his composure.

"I see," he answered, "you are acquainted with the circumstances of this unfortunate affair, which no one can deplore more than myself; it only remains for me to release Monsieur de

Rouvray from this engagement."

He took out his portefeuille, and Henriette's heart thrilled with

joy, as she closed her hand upon the bond.

"And now, mademoiselle," said the general, in his blandest voice, "Allow me—it is the first opportunity I have had of doing so—to offer my excuses for hasty words uttered when last we were alone. Let my deep, my sincere affection for you plead my pardon."

"I have no wish, Monsieur le général, to remember the past; the present is too pleasing to me, in the release from debt and obligation of my brother. All I have to ask, as a favour for the future, is, that no allusion be ever made to our former conversation,—it

would be in vain."

She rose from her chair.

"And," he said, following her to the chimney where she stood, "is no hope permitted? may no chance be given me to gain a step in your favour?"

"I can hold out no hope, monsieur, not the slightest, I am calm, you see; I have weighed all, and my resolve is unshaken. I could

never love you.

"I have to thank your candour once more, Mademoiselle de Rouvray; it but remains for me to say adieu; no, à revoir," he said, correcting himself; "we shall, I trust, meet again." He bowed low; Henriette rang the bell; the portières opened and closed.

"And I am resolved," he said mentally, as they did so, and he

descended the staircase.

CHAPTER XXV.

"And you promise me never—never to play again," said Henri's sister to him, once more insinuating into his hand the bond which he had twice indignantly flung from him. This time he retained it, and the bitter tears of contrition and self-reproach stood in his eyes. "Promise me too, Henri, above all, that this shall be a secret between us; do not now breathe a word to any one."

He pressed her hand; he could not speak; had he attempted to

do so, he would have wept like a child.

"And one more thing, dear brother. When we return to des Ormes, you will read with Monsieur Bruton, to oblige and please our father, who has so kindly, so promptly, and without a question, given up our money?"

"Where is my father's letter?" he inquired, "you have not

shown me that, Henriette."

"Never mind it, dear; it is full of anxiety as to the use we mean to make of this sum, and some future day we will go together and present ourselves before him, and confessing all, own how the money was applied. He will forgive us—I know he will—for though a little cross sometimes, he is a good father."

"Oh! Henriette," said her brother, drawing her towards him, "you are my guardian angel in all things. I will cheerfully do what you desire; study—anything; and when I tell my father, he must, and will, I am sure, refund you your money, out of my future fortune."

"There, Henri, there," she cried weeping on his neck,—but they were tears of gratitude to heaven,—"say no more about that. Get well, and oh, my dear brother, avoid the general, or he will be your ruin. You know not," and she shuddered, "how I dread that man; he seems like some evil spirit to me." And her repentant brother promised all she desired, in one fond embrace, as her loving arms encircled him.

The week passed away, and Edgar was gone—only to Lyons, it is true, but that was leagues and leagues from Paula. The parting was bitter to all; it was so uncertain when he could return, and

Paris was full of so many temptations.

And he was gone. Paula sat upright in her sister's arms, listening to each receding footstep as he departed; she heard him even cross the yard below. The porte cockere opened and closed heavily, as it shut him out, even from her hearing, and then she fell back in her sister's arms in violent hysterics.

When a few days brought tranquillity to Paula's heart, her absorbing idea was to have her portrait completed, that she might

send it to him.

Henri was sufficiently recovered to pass a few hours in the evening au salon. Paula's buoyancy had almost returned, and Henriette was cheerful to outward seeming, save when the general came.

It is true, that was not often: he did not seek a word in private with her brother, and he was most cordial to all—nothing more.
"It is strange," exclaimed la comtesse, one day, as they were all

seated round the fire, enjoying the pleasant light of the blazing logs as twilight crept on, "very strange that Monsieur l'abbé has never called; he promised to come and lecture mon neveu là."

"We saw him to-day," answered Paula, "at Madame Lagrange's; he said he had been much occupied, and, indeed, he looked careworn and thin. I quite pitied, though I don't exactly like him."

"And why not, pray?"

"Why? I cannot explain why. His rigidity awes me, and when he fixes those large, dark eyes on me, I tremble—their expression is so strange." And she looked thoughtfully into the fire.

"I think he might find time to call here, as well as at your Madame Lagrange's," said her aunt, petulantly.

"Judging him, I think, correctly," hazarded Madame de Rouv-"I should say he is a man rather to seek the lowly and suffering than the rich."

"Were you there, Henriette?" asked her aunt.

"No; you remember I remained to write some notes for you."

"True : I forgot."

"We were before our usual time," continued Paula, "or we should not have seen him. Madame Lagrange said he had called there frequently lately, but very early. He assigned as a reason. that he did not wish to interrupt my sittings. I thought it very considerate of him."

Madame de Rouvray sat in deep thought, her eyes fixed on the

fire.

"He thinks my miniature very like," remarked Paula; "he looked at it a long time. What a pity he is a priest! I am sure he would have made an excellent artist; his observations were so just: he pointed out several faults to Madame Lagrange."

"Some visitor," said Henriette, as a step was heard in the ante-

chamber.

A movement of surprise took place among all, as the Abbé de Brissac was announced: when Henri was presented to him,

"Monsieur l'abbé," he said, laughing. "I am told to prepare for a lecture from you. May I implore leniency for a while, till I gain strength to meet it."

"I should not lecture," the other replied, in his tone of proud humility; "I have no right to do so-I might presume to advise."

"We were just speaking of you, Monsieur de Brissac," said la comtesse, "and wondering why you had not been to see us. I have a right to complain of you."

"Allow much occupation to plead my excuse, madame, and,—

I feared intruding."

"Oh! that fear really never should have found a moment's place in your mind; it will ever be an honour to receive Monsieur de Brissac."

"But," he replied, "we eschew honours," and He bowed low.

he smiled faintly.

"Well then, pleasure, will that do?" she returned, "and I am sure all here echo my words. My niece Paula is quite in ecstasy at your approbation of her portrait: she says you show the tact of an artist in all your criticisms.

Paula turned crimson. The abbé looked fixedly at her, and said. "The approval of anything by mademoiselle is indeed flattering

to one so humble as myself."

Henriette could not but think his words too meek for the occasion; there seemed an insincerity about them, and as though they sought to hide some other sentiment.

Paula could not utter a word: this man always seemed to

oppress her.

The conversation now became general. Madame de Rouvray, it was observed, spoke more unrestrainedly with him on this occasion than with any other visitor. She was the very reverse of Paula, who sat silent and reserved.

"Paula," said her aunt, at last, "what are you thinking of? You were all life and gaiety before Monsieur de Brissac entered,

and now you are pale and silent?"

"I trust I have brought no atmosphere of sadness with me, mademoiselle?" he said, turning on her his deep, inquiring gaze. "No, indeed. I—" She stopped.

"The truth is," laughed Henri, "Paula is love-sick, and Mon-sieur de Brissac recalls Edgar to her mind, as she first met monsieur, when taken by him to Madame Lagrange's."

There was a dead silence. Had something like this been said to le bon, homely, Père Andriot, this would have terminated in laughs and badinage. Before the cold, stern abbé, whose favourite doctrine was not in favour of marriage, except as a social necessity, it was as ill-timed as a speech in praise of a parent's virtues before a natural child.

"How aghast you look!" continued Henri. "One would think I had said something terrible. You know, Pauline, I speak truth, for I found her to-day—"and he addressed himself to the abbé, "with both her hands supporting her head, her elbows on the table, contemplating Edgar's picture! and I declare there

was a tear on the face of it.

"Oh, Henri!" cried she, in a tone of deprecation.

Monsieur de Brissac's eyes were fixed, as if by some magnetic influence, on her face; he looked stern, and paler than usual. Rising suddenly, he said,-

"Permit me, Madame la comtesse, to make my adieux: I have

forgotten a most pressing engagement.

"I much regret it," she said, rising also, ' for we cannot count

this as a visit. May we hope soon to see you again?"
"I will endeavour," he hurriedly answered. "But indeed you do me too much honour."

He coldly bowed to all, and quitted the salon.

"Really, mon neveu," said his aunt, "you should be less thought-less. You have driven away the abbé."

"Why," he asked innocently, "what have I said?"

"Said! why about love; you know it is not a proper subject

before him."

"Oh hang him," answered he, "why doesn't he like to hear of it? he chose to be a priest. I have said a thousand worse things before Père Andriot.

"Père Andriot, Henri," said Henriette, "is quite another person—the joys of the young he makes his own; whereas the Abbé de Brissac avowedly dislikes even marriage."

"Hang him! again say I: then why come among the young? does he think we are all anchorites?"

"My son, my son!" cried his mother, in a tone of horror, "you

forget of whom you speak: a saintly, good man!"

And one sought in the first society! it is quite an honour, his

visiting any one, especially Protestants," said is contesse.
"I wish he would never come again!" sighed Paula; "his pre-

sence casts a gloom over everything."

"When will your miniature be finished?" asked Henriette, in a whisper, of her sister.

"To morrow." answered Paula. "I shall be delighted, for

more reasons than one."

"Where can the general be?" cried la comtesse, suddenly: "three or four days, and he has not been;" she looked askance at Henriette.

"He said he was going out of town," answered Henri. "I wish," he added, "I could go to Madame de Verneuil's with you

all to night; I shall be so dull alone."

"I will stay with you," cried both sisters at once.

"Pardon me, mes nièces," answered their aunt, "but I cannot allow that: you must accompany me, you have stayed at home enough."

"I shall be with you, Henri," said his mother, gently.
"Oh! I forgot that," he replied, making a kind of grimace, as though not anticipating too much amusement; "thank you, maman."

Bastien threw open the door, announcing dinner. All rose.

and the conversation ended.

The Abbé de Brissac hurriedly quitted Madame de Cressy's hôtel, then slackening his pace, he moved forward in deep thought, and his cheek grew pale each moment, and his brow darkened. "Why should I care," he soliloquized, "if she marry? She is not of my fath, and her remaining single would not add another devout child to our holy church. She has not thought enough to become a convert; so there is little hope for her thus: religion has as yet made no impression on her heart—so let her marry!" And he walked on in silence, but the furrowed brow threw its thoughts to the surface. "Why did she never mention our meeting at Tours? And if that fête is alluded to by her family, she grows pale: why is this? It is a strange deceit, a strange concealment. Why, too, have I never openly spoken of it? Was it to meet her wishes? if so, it was wrong. Deceit ever brings its own punishment. Why does she occupy my thoughts thus? Why not her sister? she is good and sincere." Here he paused again. "Paula," he resumed, "Paula! 'tis a saintly name a sweet name; and oh, how fair the face! A madonna's—those large dark eyes, so confiding and loving; that pure, girlish look! She is very fair-very fair; oh, would she had more thought of holier things than marriage! And she wept over his miniature! poor weak child of earth!" and the self-sustained man walked on.

At ten o'clock Henriette descended to the salon, dressed for the soirée. When she entered a spectacle almost of terror met her

There sat the general with her brother.

"Ah! mademoiselle," he said, in a joyous tone, rising to meet her, "may I be permitted without an accusation of flattery to say how exquisitely lovely you look to-night? Rather pale, though: vet you looked brilliant as you entered.'

It was true; she had turned pale. He, the tempter, the betrayer, with Henri,—alone, too! She merely bowed coldly.

"May I lead you to a seat? No? You see me all devotion tonight. The light of friendship has shed its balmy influence around me. I heard de Rouvray would be alone, so I have come to pass my evening with him."

Every word told upon her heart, as he intended it to do. "How had he heard? then he must have spies-but where?" Amélie flashed across her mind. Murmuring some excuse she hastily

left the room.

The general smiled in derision, and reseated himself.

"She goes out but little now," he said, evidently resuming a conversation. "De Brèges is with her constantly. At night,

indeed, she always visits Frascati's."

The door opened, and Henriette entered with her mother. The general placed his handkerchief before his mouth to conceal his laughter. His triumph was complete. His eye met hers, and it spoke volumes to her terror-stricken mind.

"Don't leave them alone, maman dearest," she whispered. Alas! what was that weak woman opposed a De la Valerie?

"I suppose I must forgive your absence," said la comtesse, after a host of apologies on his part; "for it is very kind to come and sit with my poor nephew."

And giving her three fingers in adieu, she departed with her nieces, one of them with a heart filled with forebodings of evil.

CHAPTER XXVI.

"My dear Henriette," said her mother, as they were walking next morning towards Madame Lagrange's with Paula, rather later than usual, "will you accompany me on Sunday to St. R-P I am most anxious to hear Monsieur de Brissac preach."

"Certainly," answered her daughter, "we will all go; wont you,

Paula?"

"If you wish it, I will: but I would rather not. I cannot overcome a certain feeling of repugnance towards the Abbé. However, we will go on Sunday; let it be so settled, and without my aunt. Let us go quietly; he will not notice us: we can then form a better estimate of his merits."

"Just my thought," replied Henriette. "You say, maman, that the general did not remain late last night?" and she turned towards

her mother

"No, my child, only about an hour." "And nothing particular was said?"

"Not that I heard. I told you that your maid Amélie called me out of the room once, saying she wished to speak to me, and it was only to consult me about the trimming of your dresses for the opera this evening, a matter you know la comtesse herself generally superintends. I told her so; my taste might not agree with your aunt's. However, she seemed so anxious to please you, that I listened to all she had to say. I think she takes a great interest in you."

Nothing more was said on the subject.

They arrived at Madame Lagrange's, and found her in great consternation. Paula's miniature had disappeared in a most mysterious manner. She had been working at it early in the morning, hoping to have completed it that day. Having gone for a few moments into the small room adjoining her outer one, she fancied she heard a footstep, and asked, "Who's there?"

No one replied, so she continued her occupation. On her return to the other apartment, the door leading to the staircase was aiar. She looked out: not a soul was visible, and, going to the table to continue her painting, the miniature was no longer there! She had inquired of the concierge. No person, that she had observed.

had passed.

In vain they conjectured everything likely and unlikely. Paula's sanguine mind suggested to her that Edgar had unexpectedly re-

turned, and was playing them a trick.

"We must commence another, if Mademoiselle pleases," sighed the poor artist. It was a severe blow to her; she had reckoned on the five louis she was to have been paid for it. None but those who have counted on a certain sum, on a certain day, can imagine what she felt.

"I will willingly sit," answered Paula, taking off her bonnet; "but it is very strange. I am much disappointed if Edgar has not really been here, and taken it—he was so anxious to have it this week."

With a trembling hand Madame Lagrange recommenced her task, sighing as she did so. Scarcely had the first lines been traced, when a heavy foot was heard plodding up the stairs; one knock at the door announced a visitor. Madame Lagrange hastened to open it. A porter stood there, the commissionairethat class thoroughly appertaining to France.

"A parcel for Madame Lagrange," he said, giving a small box, carefully enveloped and sealed. "Is it here?"

"Yes," she replied. "From whom?"

"I don't know," he answered, turning to depart; "a monsieur in a large cloak gave it to me, and paid."

"A monsieur?" she cried, still holding the unopened box.
"What can it be? What was he like?"

"Well-tall-no, not very tall; dark, I think; that is, as dark as ce demoiselle," and he pointed to the fair-haired Henriette. "Indeed, I scarcely can say, for he came to the corner near the rue de Rivoli, as I was eating my breakfast. 'Take this directly,' he said; 'be sure it arrives safely; I shall know; and there are quarante sous for you. 'Oui, mon bourgeois,' I said, 'and merci.'
Tiens," he added. "I was well paid; and in my hurry to obey him. I scarcely noticed him; for he came and was gone in an instant." And, touching his casquette, he plodded down stairs.

It was a small box, about the size of the hand. Lagrange tore it open, and started in amazement. It contained five louis, the price of the miniature; and on a scrap of paper the word, "Restitution." A thousand things were conjectured:

Paula would have that it was Edgar's doing.

"You will see," she cried, tying on her bonnet. "Ma bonne madame, I cannot sit to-day. Forgive me; I know he is in Paris."

And she almost danced with joy.

"I suppose we shall know some day," said Henriette; "were Henri out. I should think it a plot of his: and if Edgar be not here, which I feel convinced is not the case, I shall suspect Henri's participation in some trick."

"A demain," said Paula, lightly tripping down stairs, followed by

the others.

Anxiously she watched all day, but no Edgar came. Henri so positively disclaimed anything relative to the matter, that all were fain to acknowledge his complete ignorance of this mystery.

"It is some unknown lover, Paula," he said. "I always told you you must have a fairy lover, and he's come at last; but I never thought he would spring up in the streets of Paris."

"How can you laugh!" she answered, impatiently; "I am so-

disappointed: I thought Edgar had returned."

"I dare say," he said, continuing his badinage, "you'll see some handsome unknown with his eyes fixed upon you, at the Opera. Comique, this evening, and you'll return home forgetting Edgar and all beside—having noticed your miniature dangling from his neck by a blue ribbon, with a motto in gold letters on it, of 'à la vie, à la mort!' I shall look for him.'

"You?" cried Henriette; "are you going?"

"Oh yes: I look interesting with my arm in a sling. The general says it will do me good.'

It was the first allusion to him that Henri had lately made.

"Is he coming?" she asked.

"Yes: it was he who sent my aunt the box, which he had some difficulty in obtaining. It is a grand night: some star going to descend and warble for our amusement. I long to go; I shall feel like a child to-night; it is so long since I have been out."

Henriette mused: uneasy thoughts had been engendered by his words.

When she entered her room to dress before dinner, she found,

as usual, her toilette for the evening laid out on the bed.

"This is the one I wore last week aux Italiens," she said, turning to Amélie; "where is the dress you showed my mother last night, which you were trimming?"

The woman looked down. "Oh!" she answered, hastily, "Madame la comtesse did not like it, and I thought mademoiselle

looked so lovely in this blue, that I substituted it."

Her mistress said no more,—it confirmed all her previous suspicions. Few words passed, and she descended au salon. Amélie went to the comtesse's apartments. When Fanchette had completed her mistress's toilette, that lady dismissed her.

"Madame la comtesse will, I hope, pardon her pauvre servante," said the former, when they were alone, "but she has been occupied in doing something she hopes will not offend her."

" What is it, ma bonne Amélie?" asked that lady.

"Why, you see, madame, I thought ce pauvre cher Monsieur Henri must dislike the room where he has been so long confined, and knowing how much Madame la comtesse loves him, I thought she would not be angry at a little surprise I have arranged to please him. There are two pretty little rooms never occupied au rez de chaussée, a sweet little salon, and chambre à coucher. I have decorated them, and made them a perfect bijou de garçon; and while madame is at the opera this evening, I will have all Monsieur Henri's things moved there."

She stopped, and looked timidly at her mistress.

"Amélie, you are a good, thoughtful creature, a real treasure. You have indeed pleased me; everything to gratify my nephew

must meet my approbation."

"Then indeed I am rewarded," she answered, with her cold smile; "I thought madame would see with me, that it was more convenable for Monsieur Henri to be away from his sister's observation; there he can receive his acquaintances, ce charmant Monsieur le général, without always being au salon; young ladies génent gentlemen sometimes; it is natural. And madame will say nothing about it, till monsieur is installed there? All shall be ready, and fires lighted, by his return from the opera."

"Not a word," answered her delighted mistress; "I will take

him there myself on my return.

Their loge à l'opéra was on the first tier.

Shortly after their arrival, the general dropped in. He was in brilliant spirits, which served to damp Henriette's in a fearful degree. She and Paula were seated side by side in front, Henri next them, the general conversing apart with la comtesse.

"Good heavens!" cried Paula, grasping her sister's arm, and

gazing wildly at a loge de parterre.

"What P" asked the other, following her gaze.

"How silly I am!" she replied, smiling; "he wouldn't be here."
"Of whom are you speaking, Paula?"

"Why,"—she hesitated, and whispered, "I really thought I saw the abbe's dark eyes peeping at us under the half-closed curtain of that loge."

"Oh, he wouldn't be here!" replied her sister.

"Paula has found her fairy lover," laughed Henri, overhearing the first exclamation; "has he the blue ribbon and miniature, Paula?" "How foolish you are!" she said, hastily.

"Where is this mysterious thief?" asked the general, advancing.

Henri had related the affair of the miniature to him.

"Oh, Paula wont show us. Where is he, dear?" he asked, searching the lower loges with his lorgnette. It was his turn to start, and turn deathly pale. Henriette's eyes anxiously followed his. In a loge de parterre was a lady magnificently dressed—too much so for the occasion, and displaying herself in evident pride to the many eyes that were fixed upon her. She was a tall, dark, handsome woman; but with a bold, audacious look, which made Henriette almost turn away; beside her sat a fair young man,

whose lorgnette was directed to their loge.

Henri rose, apparently wrought up to frenzy, and hurriedly walked into the ante-room, where he threw himself on a couch. The general followed. His sister would have given worlds to do the same, but durst not. Paula's glance was fascinated by the mysteriously-curtained loge de parterre, where she had fancied she saw the abbé. Her sister's ear was anxiously alive to the whispered conversation of Henri and the general. She could but catch the names—de Brèges and Arsène! Then the general said, "Hush!" and their voices sank once more to a whisper. After some moments her brother returned to the front, and leaned against the side, near her aunt. He seemed unconscious of every one present, save the occupants of the loge.

"I don't think Henri is well." whispered his agitated sister to

her aunt. "Don't notice it; but pray let us return."

Madame la comtesse glanced in alarm at her nephew. He was leaning over her; her chair shook with the trembling of his agitated hands, which leant on it for support.

"Come, mes nièces," she said, rising, and now in real alarm,

"let us go home. We have seen enough-I am tired!"

"But, Madame la comtesse," said the general, advancing, "the

opera is not more than half performed."

"Oh, we can return another evening;" and she drew on her

shawl.

The general came to the front, and fixed a long carnest gaze from beneath his beetle brows, on the loge below. Henri had again drawn back. Henriette's eyes never quitted the general, who slightly raised his eyebrows, and passed his handkerchief over his face—she felt it was a signal to some one. Then his glance fell on hers: he smiled; his smile was radiant with triumph. "He medemically hear many and the result of the second of the smile was radiant with triumph."

"Has mademoiselle been amused?" he said—"I hope so," and

he drew back.

Both sisters sighed: there was an oppression on their hearts and

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on their minds, as they quitted the loge. Henri seemed bewildered: he rushed out alone.

"Will you not offer Madame la comtesse your arm?" asked the

general: Henri mechanically did so.

"Pauvre enfant, you tremble; you are weak," she said, kindly. In the waiting-room below stood the dark woman of the other loge, and her companion. Both looked at Henri, the gentleman in cold defiance, she with a smile; and they passed before them.

"The Comte de Brèges' voiture!" shouted a valet de pied.

"This is really charming," cried the general, (who had accompanied them home, at their aunt's solicitation,) when she led the way to Henri's new apartment. "Indeed, Madame la comtesse,

few young men have so good and thoughtful an aunt as yourself."
"I must not claim more than I deserve," she replied; "the
thought was not mine, only the pleasure of seeing it accomplished.
I blush to acknowledge that the idea emanated from a treasure of

a maid I possess-Amélie."

The girls stood amazed: Paula did not well comprehend all—Henriette shuddered. She felt that there was some evil power at work to entrap or to betray her brother, whose subtle spells even her strong and vigilant affection might be unable to destroy.

CHAPTER XXVII.

On the day following a gentleman called, and sending up his card, requested permission to see Mademoiselle de Rouvray, as the bearer of a message from Lord Vesey. With no small surprise she descended to the salon to receive him.

His mission was soon told. He came to present the young lady with a small spaniel, a model of that beautiful breed, commonly called the King Charles's. She had often admired them, and this attention on his part, in recollection of her admiration,

made her much his debtor in gratitude.

The letter accompanying it briefly stated, that his father's continued illness detained him in England, but he trusted an improvement in his health would soon enable him to return to Paris. He concluded with the hope that sometimes when caressing "Gem," she would recall his late master to memory.

"Gem," she would recall his late master to memory.

"If Mademoiselle de Rouvray has any commands for Lord Vesey," said the bearer, "I shall be returning in a week, and will

gladly charge myself with them."

"I will trouble you with a letter of thanks," she answered. "Before the termination of that period, I will send it to your hôtel by my brother, who will personally thank you for the trouble you have so kindly taken." The visitor shortly afterwards took his leave.

Henriette knew not well what to say to Henri respecting his change of apartments. To appear too anxious might awaken

thoughts better suppressed.

· Some days passed, and they saw little of the general: whether

he visited her brother often, she knew not.

It was a relief to her when Sunday arrived, and she accompanied her mother and sister to St. R.—. Even though it was not her own church, she felt that upon this occasion it would act as a sedative to her excited mind.

Madame la comtesse troubled the Protestant church little; "the hours were too inconvenient;" so she said her prayers at

home.

Since Henri's illness, his sisters had been unable to attend divine worship, for their aunt would not permit them to go even to a church alone; and strange to say, their mother, who had been so zealous a Protestant when under Bruton's eye, now evidently

avoided all mention of the church.

Quite unostentatiously the three, accompanied by Manette, entered St. R.— at an early hour. Without the intervention of the general, as on the previous occasion, they obtained seats, though they were further from the pulpit. Madame de Rouvray sat wrapped in the profoundest attention; not a word of the abbe's escaped her. He had entered cold and rigid as ever. No one, judging by his manner, would have supposed the church to have been his choice; there was no enthusiasm; on the contrary, his ministration seemed as the performance of a stern duty. For some time they were unseen by him. Even on that generally immoveable face there was no mistaking the transitory passage of some emotion, when he at last recognised them. Was it pleasure? was it pain? Before they could ask themselves these questions, it was gone, and he stood before them a statue.

"Henriette," whispered her sister, "I am certain it was his face I saw at the opera. I never could mistake his eyes. I dare not look at him when he is speaking to me—now I can. I am

sure it was he.'

"Possibly," answered Henriette, thoughtfully. "Why should he be immaculate, or free from a desire to hear fine music well executed? Of course he could not well go there openly."

"How ill and care-worn the abbé looked," said Paula, as they

quitted the church.

"I thought so too," answered her sister. "I am now sure that man has some hidden grief; he is much altered since we first saw

him."

They had reached the Tuileries, when, about the centre of the gardens, a quick step fell on their ear. Though the walks were crowded, it arrested their attention, for it had the unmistakable sound of some one following them. Paula turned. The Abbé de Brissac was beside them.

"I am fortunate," he said, "in meeting friends in this crowd. I

presume you have been enjoying this lovely day in a walk?"

Henriette looked fixedly at him.

"We have attended St. R——, Monsieur l'abbé," she replied.

"Indeed?" was the rejoinder; but his countenance exhibited no surprise whatever. "I must, indeed, accuse myself of blindness in not seeing you there,"

"And you did not see us, Monsieur de Brissac?" asked Paula. venturing to look at him in evident incredulity.

His eye was fixed upon her with an indefinable expression.

"I did not." he answered, calmly; "which surprises me; I generally see every one. Where were you placed?" "Inconceivable!" thought both sisters. "Surely he saw us P

Why then deny it?"

Manette had drawn her mistress cently forward. After the first

salutations, she walked on in deep silence.

"You look pale, monsieur," said Henriette, to change the subject: she could not but feel convinced he had, for some motive.

uttered an untruth. "Are you not well?"

"Well?" he echoed, and his brow contracted, as though in pain. "Yes, I thank you; but I have been much occupied of late. To be much at home, and of course with little exercise, is no improver of the health. I am now, for the first time for days: going to see Madame Lagrange: this it is that has procured me the pleasure of overtaking you."

"Have you not seen madame lately?" asked Paula; and, scarcely

knowing why, she cast her eye on him.

A shade of colour came over his cheek as he answered, his ever bent on the ground, "Not since we last met there; it was your final sitting, I think, mademoiselle; I presume your miniature is completed?"

"It was completed," answered Henriette, "all but the last few touches. When we went for that purpose, the day following the one you met my mother and sister there, the miniature had dis-

appeared in a most extraordinary manner."
"Disappeared?" he cried, looking into Paula's face with that expression which always so startled her, "do you mean lost?"

Paula related the circumstances, not forgetting the arrival of

the porter with the "restitution."

"I am inclined to think, with Mademoiselle Paula," he said. calmly, after listening to all their suppositions, "that her brother has in some manner mystified her. I have no doubt it will be found some day. You are not sitting for another. I presume?"

"Yes, I am," she answered, "every day; for I am most anxious

to send it to Monsieur Andriot."

There was no mistaking his start this time. He compressed his lips, and a dark scowl came over that handsome face. There was a dead silence for some moments.

"We part here, mesdemoiselles," he said, stopping near the entrance from the quay to the gardens. "I have a previous call

to make, and must see Madame Lagrange a little later.'

Madame de Rouvray stopped. As he wished her good morning, she seemed on the point of saying something, but paused, and merely bowed. Her daughters did the same, and they parted. For some moments they walked on in silence. Half-way across the bridge to the Faubourg, Paula stopped to looked at a boat on the water: her sister did the same.

"Look!" cried the former, turning her head the way they had

passed: "there is that mysterious abbé leaning over the parapet. as though he were watching us: I cannot understand that man.*

"There is something very strange of late in his manner." observed Henriette. "He moves-he sees we have recognised him."

Once more Paula turned round, as they entered their own street. "Good gracious, Henriette!" she exclaimed, "there is that mysterious man following us like our shadow; I saw him at the extreme end of the street. When I turned, he drew back. It is very strange."

"And this is not the way to the Rue Jacob," answered Hen-

riette: "what can he mean?"

"I think he is mad, Henny. Here we are, thank goodness!

Now he may wander where he pleases; he really startles me."

They entered the court-yard. "Maman," said Henriette, "will you come with us to Henri's room? My aunt will scold us if we go alone."

"Willingly," answered their mother; "Manette, go on and an-

nounce us.

"No. maman." cried Henriette; "let us all go together; it looks too ceremonious to our dear Henri. Let not anything on our part raise a more formidable barrier between us than others try to make.'

He could not from his rooms see them cross the yard, for they looked into the garden. As they walked on, the concierge was

coming from the house to his loge.

"Is Monsieur Henri at home?" asked Henriette.

"No, mademoiselle," he answered, hesitating slightly; "I let him out an hour ago."

"I think that is not true," whispered Paula: "let us go and see!" "Ce père Philippe is watching us," said Manette; "how very curious those concièrges are."

Unheeding him, they turned round towards Henri's rooms.

"Monsieur n'u est pas, madame," cried the man, running after them.

"Thank you," answered Manette, "but his rooms are; we are

going there." They walked on.

The key was on the inside of Henri's door. Just as they were on the point of rapping, the door hastily and softly opened, and Amélie stood before them.

"Ciel I" she exclaimed in terror; then endeavouring to recover

herself, said, "Ces dames, pardonnez-moi, m'ont fait peur!"

She tried to draw the door after her.

"Stop!" cried Manette, putting her foot between it and the post,

"my mistress wishes to see her son."

Rouvrey, "Monsieur Henri is engaged, I think. Shall I announce madame?"

"Allow us to pass, mademoiselle," said Henriette, coldly; "we will announce ourselves; and remember, for the future, your place is in our apartments, not my brother's.'

The soubrette held down her head, endeavouring to say some-

thing about "Madame la comtesse," and slunk up stairs.

. Henriette opened the door; there was a small ante-room before the salon.

"Henri," she cried, "may we enter? maman, Paula, and I?"
There was a movement as in confusion, in the next room, and a
moment after the general stood at the entrance, with his cold smile.
"Permit me, ladies," he said, "to act as valet, and announce you."
And with a kind of mimic servility he commenced doing so. It
was the first time, even Henriette admitted, that he had looked undignified; the jest was unbecoming his years, and she felt that,
like all he did, it had a motive—evidently he wished to delay their

"His highness is willing to receive you." he said, at length,

flinging open the door.

Manette stayed in the ante-chamber; the others entered. Henri looked flushed and excited. He advanced, however, and affectionately saluted them all; more particularly Henriette.

"So you have been to St. R-P" he said. "Did de Brissac"

preach ?"

entrance.

"Yes," answered his mother. "It is something more than mortal, the power of that man, both in language and manner."

"Is it not a pity, mademoiselle," said the general, addressing Paula, "that the abbé should be a priest?" He fixed his eyes on

her inquiringly.

She changed colour at the strangeness of his manner. "I do

not think so," she answered coldly.

"Do you know," he said, "that your immaculate priest likes gaiety as well as others?" As he spoke, his eye wandered from one to the other of the girls. "He was in a loge de parterre, at the Opera Comique, the night we were there, with his curtains, however, well-drawn. A friend of mine coming suddenly from his loge, ran almost against him. True, his hat was slouched over his eyes, and the collar of his cloak well up; but no one could mistake the Abbé de Brissac, once having seen him."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Paula, earnestly, "then it was he,

in a *loge* to the right-hand?"

"Ah! mademoiselle saw him,"—he accentuated every word—

"yes, a box on the right hand."

"Strange," said Henriette, "that he should go there, when he professes so much distaste for all pleasure. Besides, it is unbecoming his calling."

"I cannot believe but that there is some error—some mistaken

identity," remarked Madame de Rouvray.

"Oh, impossible," answered the general. "My friend knows him well, and was on the point of shaking hands with him, when the other drew back and closed the door."

"Why such mystery?" asked Henriette.

Paula was perfectly silent.

"Why, great causes produce startling effects, acts and deeds," said the general. "Man is a weak animal—man, I say, Mademoiselle de Rouvray. You know no human weakness, (he bowed,) no vacillation. But those who think themselves the strongest, some-

times bow to fate or circumstances. Suppose some day the Abbé de Brissac-what is the quotation? am I correct?

Lost e'en Heaven for a woman's love!

or risked, or something of the sort,—the meaning is the same." "Merciful heavens!" cried Paula, starting with an energy un-

usual to her, "it would be a fearful sin, to break such vows

as his."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the general, "who speaks of broken vows? I speak of an uncontrollable feeling. Vigils, and fasts, seclusion and a monastic life, well persevered in, would be a due atonement for the pursuit of a happy dream. I am sure I never saw a man look more as if he had commenced the first, he is scarcely recognisable lately."

"He looks very ill, certainly," said Henriette; "Paula and I

were saying so."

So engaged had they been in conversation that Henri's absence was unnoticed: he had entered the bedroom.

"Henri!" cried his elder sister, suddenly rising and pushing the

door, "where are you?"

There was a glass over the chimney-piece facing the door; as she pushed it, another hand than his reclosed it, but not before she had seen the shadow of a tall woman's figure in the opposite

She turned sick at heart, and then recollected the concierge trying to stop them—Amélie too, and the general's foolery as they

"Mademoiselle is faint," he said, with a peculiar smile, yet affecting great concern; "pray take a little water." He offered her a glass from a side table.

"What is the matter, my child?" exclaimed her mother, taking

her hand, anxiously.

"Dearest Henriette," cried Paula, pillowing her head on her

bosom, as she stood over her.

"It is past," whispered Henriette, with quivering lips. "The room is warm, let us go!" She rose. Henri came from the inner chamber; he looked confused and annoyed.

"Forgive me," he said, "but I am not very well, maman; my arm aches, too: it is the cold, I suppose. Henriette!" he exclaimed. anxiously, rushing towards her. "What's the matter?—are you not well?"

She tried to speak, and burst into tears.

"Mademoiselle is nervous," said the general. "The room is

warm; I think she would be better in the air."

"Don't cry, darling," said her brother, fondly kissing her; and taking a handkerchief from the table, he wiped her eyes. "There, Henny, my own Henny, don't cry; you're not well, dearest. Go with little Paula; I'll come up stairs in a few moments. Go." And he led her to the outer door, where Manette was, who flew to her fillette chérie in terror. As they quitted the room, Henriette heard her brother breathe a deep, heavy sigh, and he slowly returned to his salon, and the company there.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MADAME DE ROUVEAY and her faithful attendant proceeded to her apartment, and the two ladies were left alone in Henriette's room.

"Sit down, Paula," said the latter, "and let us have some conversation. I have much to say; there are many things I have

withheld from you which I feared to tell."

And the two sat down on the couch, their arms about each other, whilst Henriette told all her forebodings about their brother.

"Oh, would to heaven!" cried Paula, "that we were again at des Ormes; for what protection have we here? My aunt sees nothing, will listen to nothing."

"If you were to write, darling, to our father, and beg him to

let us return?"

"I have asked my father to take us home," said her sister.

"You, Paula! and when?" she inquired in surprise.

"Oh, days since. But he refuses; neither will he come here yet: he pleads occupation, and says my motives for the desire are absurd."

· "What motives did you assign?"

"I scarcely know. I said we were unhappy here. I am—I feel so." And she sighed—even she, the once thoughtless Paula, was growing saddened.

"Write again, dear sister; my doing so would not avail. You

may do much."

"I will try, Henny; but I know it will be useless. I see they wish to break off my engagement with Edgar."

At that moment Amélie entered the room.

"Madame la comtesse," she said, "begs the young ladies will come down to the salon. Monsieur Henri and the general are there."

"Both?" asked Henriette. "Say," she added, rising, "we will

be there in a few moments.

Amélie turned to obey.

"Ah, mechant animal?" she exclaimed, catching up little Gem, who was playing on the carpet; "see how you have torn mademoiselle's handsome handkerchief."

Henriette received it from her hand, and taking up the animal,

began to caress it.

Amélie quitted the room.

"That must be maman's handkerchief," suggested Paula; "for here is yours. I had it in my hand—you dropped it in Henri's room."

Henriette mechanically turned to the name marked in the corner. She started, and dropping it on her knee, sat gazing at it almost in terror.

Her worst suspicions were confirmed. In the corner was em-

broidered a name—the one she had upon several occasions heard of late. "Arsène!"

"Look," she exclaimed, pointing to it. "Look, Paula: I must

have taken this from Henri's table.

"Then it was that woman you saw in his room!" cried her sister, looking aghast.

"Thank Heaven, Amélie did not see it! Armed with this, I

will speak fearlessly to him. My poor Henri!"

And concealing the proof of his visitor in her pocket, they

descended to the salon.

"Enfin!" exclaimed their aunt. "Well. mes nièces, we see little of you now! Good gracious, children, how ill you both look! Really you shall go no more to those morning prayers; you are becoming dévotes like your mother; it is unsuitable to

"Pray, Madame la comtesse," exclaimed the general, who was present, "do not check so delightful an impulse in youth as devopresent, "do not check so delightful an impulse in youth as devo-tion;" he spoke sarcastically,—"it is quite refreshing; such perfect freedom, too, from all prejudice, to experience such pleasure in the divine guidance of the professor of another, and, as is generally supposed, inimical faith."

"Général de la Valerie," said Henriette, coldly, "we went to oblige my mother, who had never heard the abbé preach. Pardon me," she added, correcting herself, and addressing her aunt, "it is to you, madame, we should reply.

The general would not notice the sarcasm. "Of course you went at the desire of Madame de Rouvray," he replied, smiling. "And the greater merit is due to so much self-mortification, for you could not but feel it an unpleasant duty. Am I not correct,

mademoiselle?" and he looked at Paula.

"General," said Henri, "my sisters cannot do wrong in my mother's society. If she wished it, they were perfectly right in going."

"Thank you, Henri," they both exclaimed.

"Nay, you take my meaning wrongly," said the general. "I admire the taste of all who seek counsel from Monsieur de Brissac. He is a saintly man—immaculate—above the suspicion of wrong.".

There was sarcasm in his tone. "And zealous, too," he added; "for after he has preached in his church, he expounds in private après, during a pleasant walk across the Tuileries gardens.

Both started—how could be know of that?

"You are surprised," he said; "I will, however, not alarm you by the suspicion of being an evil spirit across your path; I am bad enough without that, am I not, Mademoiselle de Rouvray? No: the case is simply this: a friend of mine passing through the gardens saw you and mentioned it to me."

They both thought of the tall, dark figure in Henri's room—nor

were they wrong.

"This is very strange," said la comtesse, angrily, "that I am

ever the last to be told occurrences."
"Madame," answered Henriette, "we have not seen you since

our meeting Monsieur de Brissac, for it only took place this

morning."

"And still stranger," her aunt added, "that I, who condescended to invite Monsieur l'abbé to my house, am slighted by him. Yet he is ever meeting you all, either at Madame Lagrange's or somewhere. By the way," she said, changing her tone, as the idea flashed across her mind, "has Paula's miniature been found? or the mysterious thief?"

Paula coloured deeply: Henriette felt vexed, she scarcely knew

why, at the subject being named before the general.

"What is that—may I inquire?" he exclaimed. evidently interested.

La comtesse related all the circumstances.

When she had finished, he rose with a strange significant laugh. Tiens, tiens, tiens," he cried, walking towards the window. "I had forgotten that circumstance: the plot thickens."

"What can you mean, general?" asked la comtesse.

"I was addressing my own thoughts," he replied, returning.
"Pardon me, it was a whisper, and therefore rude in company. I have odd thoughts sometimes, mademoiselle," he added, looking full at Paula as he seated himself beside her. She was stooping over Gem, caressing him as he lay on her lap.

"A pretty little dog," he continued: "my Lord Vesey's souvenir, I hear? A very pretty little dog!" and he caressed it

smilingly.

"You are in a strangely gay mood, general," said Henri,

gravely: "I cannot comprehend you."

"Does he know himself?" laughed la comtesse, "You very

amusing man!"

"Am I?" he asked. "Well, it delights me that some one thinks so,—the young ladies look grave. Allow me," and he took Paula's hand before she could withdraw it; "I am a necromancer; let me tell your fortune, mademoiselle.'

She tried to withdraw it.

"Don't be childish, Paula," said her aunt. "Pray humour our delightful friend. I am sure, but for him, we should be wretched; you all look as though some evil had befallen you."

Paula unwillingly permitted her hand to remain in his.

"Ah!" he cried, after earnestly gazing at it, "what a lovely hand! Could I but tell all I see! This is witchery—enchantment! You will be the wonder and envy of all Paris!" and placing Paula's hand gently on Gem's silken curls, he turned to Henriette. "May I read Mademoiselle de Rouvray's?"

"I thank you, Monsieur le général," and she drew back: "I

think I know mine."

"Really, Henriette——" began her aunt.
"Nay," he said, interrupting her, "don't control mademoiselle. I will read it in her eyes," and he gazed on her with a peculiar look. "You will love—that is, you will marry—where you think you hate. Don't frown, pray; it obscures the book in which I am reading: you will marry, willingly, and soon." "I would sooner see Henriette dead than marry where she did not love, and could not be happy," cried Henri, impetuously, rising and leaning against the chimney. The general looked on

him with a cold, strange smile.

"Take care," he said, pointing to the mantelpiece, "you will throw down that vase with your splintered arm, which is powerless to catch anything it may displace. There!" he cried, as the goblet fell to the ground, and broke into a dozen pieces, "stronger things than that may be shattered in a moment,—resolutions, for instance." And he stooped to pick up the pieces.

"How very careless, Henri," exclaimed madame; "it was a

favourite vase of mine."

"Pray don't be angry with him," cried his sisters; "it was his

broken arm occasioned it.'

"I'll buy you another pet one," said the culprit, "and you shall call it Henri's cup. We will fill it to the brim, and drink success to all our hopes and wishes, girls," and he turned, smiling as of old, to his sisters.

"Do not fill it to overflowing, either in joy or sorrow," observed.

the general; "one, they say, palls—the other kills."

"Really, general, you do say dreadful things," shivered the comtesse. "Pray do not talk of killing; it makes one quite gloomy,—and of a Sunday, too!"

Dinner was announced. Madame de Rouvray had begged to remain in her room, on the plea of a headache; and the general

was an invited guest.

CHAPTER XXIX.

At dinner the general once more led the conversation towards the subject of Paula's stolen ministure. He pursued it adroitly; evincing, nevertheless, a deep interest in the subject. From the sisters, however, he gained no further information. His object appeared to be, the discovery of where the porter who brought the five louis had said he stood, waiting employment. Both were resolved, by a private understanding between them, not to gratify him; their aunt did not know, and Henri, too, was ignorant of particulars. At last he dropped the subject, though it seemed for some moments to plunge him into reflection.

"What could he want to know about the porter for?" asked Henriette of her sister, as they entered the salon from dinner.

"I cannot imagine: I am sure he had some motive;" and Paula looked thoughtful. "That man does nothing without an

object in view."

That evening, when all were assembled au salon, passed more agreeably than was usually the case when the general became a guest. He had abandoned his caustic mood, and was, as he really could be when it pleased him, a most entertaining companion. He was in unusually high spirits, which, however, failed to impart

their gaiety to Henri, who sat almost silent, unless when addressed by his aunt and sisters.

"I suppose, Mademoiselle Paula sits for her, miniature to-mor-

row?" asked the general, rising to take leave.

"I am sure I wish it were finished," said her aunt, pettishly; "I am tired of hearing of it. It will be some atrocity when com-

pleted, I dare say."

"It is to be hoped," he laughed, "that no vile thief will rob Monsieur Andriot of this. However, if he do not carry off the original too, there can be nothing said: mademoiselle is quite handsome enough to drive all Paris mad, and make men commit greater crimes than the harmless theft of a miniature. If he be a Catholic, it is sincerely to be hoped that he may make his confession of the sin to Monsieur l'Abbé de Brissac; for there he will meet no leniency for a dereliction of virtue;" he smiled in a peculiar manner. "But," he added, "after all, the man was honest, and that may weigh with the saint homme; for there was "restitution." I should like to see the writing: I am a connoisseur in caligraphy. When I see de Brissac, I shall ask him what penance he would award."

"Oh, pray don't mention it to him!" cried Paula, anxiously. "Eh? and why not to him?" he asked, smiling and raising his

brows. She was silent.

"Oh!" answered the comtesse, "surely, general, it is not fit that such subjects should be discussed before him."

"Ay," said Henri; "I got lectured the other day for saying before the abbé, that Paula was in love."
"Figurez-vous, général," replied la comtesse; "so strange a thing to say to a priest! Of course he instantly quitted the house!" "Of course!" laughed he. "Je m'y attendais." And bowing to all, unaccompanied by them, he quitted the salon.

The others immediately retired; but before doing so. Henriette whispered her brother, "I must see you alone to-morrow; come

up to breakfast: you have not done so lately."

He pressed her hand, and they separated.

CHAPTER XXX.

On the following morning Henriette had an interview with her brother. He was thunderstruck when she produced the handkerchief, and told him of her having seen the figure of a woman in the mirror of his room. At first he became indignant at what he termed "her prying and interference;" but soon a better feeling came over him, and he pressed her hand earnestly and affectionately, and promised for the future that he would do nothing to grieve her. But no words of hers could chase a look of anxiety from his countenance.

"I cannot avoid the general," he said, "he is my aunt's friend:

what would you have me do?"

"Why not seek the society of others of your own age? There are persons I have seen here occasionally, far more suitable."

"Yes, perhaps so; but I have linked myself with la Valerie.

and he does not like young men. He avoids them."
"Then why seek you, Henri?"

"Oh, I feel flattered by that. He says he looks upon me as if I were a relative; and truth to say, Henriette, I am under some obligations to him."

"Money? You know, dear brother, I have still five hundred louis of that money left." He smiled in a strangely sad manner.

"Five hundred!" he ejaculated. "That would not—; but there, Henny," he added, hastily, "let us change the subject—where are you going this morning?"

"To Madame Lagrange's, Rue Jacob, No. 10," she said, absently. "But do, dear, confide in me. Surely you do not owe more than

five hundred louis? pray take them."
"No, dearest; indeed I do not require them. There, do not worry; I am not in debt; there may be other obligations—it will be all right some day. I dare say—there, go and dress." Kissing her affectionately, he quitted the apartment.

Without much difficulty she persuaded her mother to accom-

pany them to Madame Lagrange's.

Henri had entered his room, and was sitting gloomily by the fire in deep thought, about an hour after the departure of his sisters. when he heard a tap at the door.

"Come in!" and the general entered.

Henri bit his lip. After the usual salutations he sat down. "Well, de Rouvray," he cried, "you seem in a brown study; has anything annoyed you?"

"No, not particularly," he replied, with seeming carelessness. "Some love quarrel with Arsène? Eh?"

"Oh, don't name her," he exclaimed, pushing back his chair, impatiently. "See," and he drew a handkerchief from his breast, "what Henriette took up in mistake yesterday in my room. And she saw her, in the mirror." He pointed to the inner apartment.

"Whew!" whistled the other; "that's awkward. But why do

young ladies come to their brother's rooms, unannounced?"

"Oh, you know, my mother being English, we have been brought up with more liberty than is usual here." he replied.

"True," said the general, "they manage these things better in

France.

"Pardon me; I think there should be no barriers placed between the love of a brother and sister. Such a love is the purest of all."

The other was silent. Henri took the handkerchief off the ground, where it had fallen; looked at it for a moment, and then

tossed it into the fire.

"It is a pity you did that," said the general: "why not have restored it to Arsène?"

"Because," answered the other, "it has been one night in

Henriette's possession. Do you think, after that, it should be paraded in that den of pollution, Frascati's?"

His companion looked at him for an instant, with an expression which his face might have worn forty years before. Even he could recognise, if not feel, the sentiment of that speech.

"Bah!" he said to himself, in answer to his own thoughts, "I shall make her a good, loving husband; the end sanctifies the means." He continued aloud—"Apropos, I've seen Arsène today; she says you must be there this evening."

'I intend it," answered Henri. "I must, indeed: and I must endeavour to retrieve my heavy losses. I owe that fellow, Prévoyal, upwards of a thousand louis! I, who promised poor Henny never to touch a card again! It was that cursed night at Arsène's

rooms!"

"Oh, I was forgetting," exclaimed the general, in a different tone, and changing the subject; "where are your sisters this morning? At Madame Lagrange's, are they not?"

"I believe so," replied he, with the tongs in his hand, raking the embers over the blackened mass of batiste, in deep thought. "Do you know the number and street?" asked the general.

"No-that is, yes. Let me see, Rue Jacob; I know Henny did mention the number. I think you wished to know-number ten.

I believe. But why do you ask?"
"Put on your paletôt, and let us go. I have an admission to see some exquisite Brazilian plants and flowers at the private serre of the palace, and your attention in calling to escort them home, will gratify them. Let us be off at once.

Henri moved his hand towards the bell.

"Never mind calling your man; there, I'll help you on with your coat. Come, my carriage is in the yard; but the ladies will like a walk there, I dare say." And hurrying him away, they drove to the Rue Jacob.

Paula was sitting listlessly—not as she had once sat for her likeness; and Henriette was endeavouring to amuse her mother, when

they heard steps ascending the stairs.

"It is most probably Monsieur l'abbé," said Madame Lagrange,

rising: "excuse me, mademoiselle."

The name produced an effect on all. Madame de Rouvray looked anxiously towards the door; Henriette's glance followed hers; no one noticed Paula, who had become pale and agitated.

"There are two persons," cried Henriette, as a rap was heard

at the door. Madame Lagrange opened it, and the general and Henri presented themselves. A quick glance passed between the sisters.

"My brother; Général de la Valerie," said Henriette, intro-

ducing them.

"We have come to see this miraculous portrait," Henri exclaimed. "Pardon me," answered the general; "we have come to run away with these ladies:" and, seating himself, he offered the ticket for the flower-show.

The sisters hastened to put on their bonnets, both equally

anxious to get him out of Madame Lagrange's apartment; but he seemed in no hurry to leave. Taking up a folio on the table, he began to profess an admiration of the sketches, and despite the intimation that they were ready, which he affected not to hear, continued his inspection; and then cleverly changing the subject to Paula's miniature, spoke of the lost one, but in an apparently indifferent manner. Paula endeavoured by signs to silence Madame Lagrange; however, his eyes were so intently fixed on her, that it was almost impossible to make her wishes understood.

"Where did you say the porter stands who brought the money?"

he carelessly inquired.

"At the corner of the Rue de Rivoli, close to l'Hôtel Meurice," answered Madame Lagrange, to whom every incident in this strange affair had been a source of speculation, over and over again.

"Rather a public spot for a secret messenger to be taken from," he replied. "But I dare say the love-sick swain is one of those who take their early morning walks in the Tuileries. By the way," he added, "à propos to walks, I hear our friend the Abbé de Brissac is to be seen every morning, from eight to nine, miniature in hand;—no, book I mean,—(que le diable émporte the mistake) walking up and down the terrace, in the Tuileries gardens."

"Who the deuce told you that?" inquired Henri. "I am sick

of the fuss made about that man.

"Ah! the ladies are waiting," exclaimed the other, rising, as though he had only that moment seen them. "Shall we go?"

An appointment was made for the next morning with the artist, and the party descended the stairs, and gaining the next street,

soon reached the flower-show.

"What can he want with the porter's address who brought the five louis?" asked Paula of her sister, as they walked together, admiring the really beautiful plants. "That man is a mystery." "He is our evil genius. I firmly believe he intends us no good;

rest assured of that," answered Henriette.

Their brother walked with them, and seemed in better spirits—
it was almost like home to him, wandering among flowers with his
two sisters again. The general gave his arm to their mother. The
gardener who showed the plants, asked permission to offer Paula
a sprig of one, which had been slightly broken from the stem.

"It is a pity," she cried, "to pluck it."
"It will die, mademoiselle," he replied; "pray accept it."

She took the beautiful flower. "I will take it to Madame Flors, Rue Vivienne," she said to her sister, "and have some artificial ones made like it. It is exquisite. I never saw anything resembling it."

"It will be lovely in your dark hair, Paula," said her sister,

"for Madame de Verneuil's ball."

"Yes-we will both have some."

Shortly afterwards they returned home, accompanied by their escort. Madame de Rouvray was calm, and more cheerful than usual; but, nevertheless, on entering she went to her own room,

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the others to the salon. La comtesse was there, with several

visitors: among the rest was the Abbé de Brissac.

"Let me leave the room, Henny," cried Paula, trying to draw back, "I would rather not enter. Do let me go." Henriette moved to allow her to pass unnoticed.

"Mademoiselle Paula!" exclaimed the general. "Nay, do not leave us; you must show Madame la comtesse your lovely flower." "Come here, child," cried her aunt. "What flower is it?

where did you purchase it?"

"Oh, la belle fleur!" exclaimed half a dozen ladies, "it is something like a laurier-rose, but much more beautiful. What a

beautiful cerise!"

"Paula, let us see it in your hair," said her brother, taking off her bonnet; "yes, it looks lovely there, in your raven hair, ma petite Paulette. You must have some artificial ones made like it. for your next ball, and I will arrange them."

Ah! mon neveu coiffeur," laughed his aunt.

Only one person there had looked at the abbé during this scene of frivolity-possibly it was to notice its effect upon him. He. however, sat cold and impassive. He certainly followed with his eyes where the others directed, but he did not give utterance to a word. Once, however, he was on the point of saving something: but, looking up, he met the general's gaze fixed on his face, before he could avert his own, and he turned coldly away from Paula, and rising and walking to a table, commenced turning the leaves of a portfolio of drawings.

"Do you admire sketches?" asked Henriette, moving towards m. She felt curious to know, and form a more accurate judgment of this man. He looked up, smiling faintly, and placed a

chair for her near his own.

"Much," he replied. "They are the miniatures of Nature." "Who talks of miniatures?" oried the general, approaching. "Has Monsieur l'abbé heard of the recent abduction of one?"

The other looked up at him with a calm smile. "Yes," he replied : "Mademoiselle Paula de Rouvray's has been stolen. I hear. from Madame Lagrange's. Perhaps Monsieur le général knows something of the trick !-- for trick it must be."

"Who P I?" exclaimed he, amazed, and staring at the abbe;

"IP what should I know of it, Monsieur de Brissac?"

"Simply this," he returned, "that naturally it must be some plaisanterie of Mademoiselle's brether; and as Monsieur le géneral is always with him, I conceived he, too, might be a party to it."

"Do you believe it a jest of Henri de Rouwray?" asked the

general, fixing his gaze on the other.

"Assuredly," he calmly answered; "what else? I told Madame

Lagrange so.

And the 'restitution,' and all?" inquired the general, who was by this time fairly staggered.

"Certainly: the person who did the one, sent the other."

The general turned away.

"If it cost me hundreds," he said, mentally, "I'll discover, if

possible, whether I am right or wrong," and he joined the group round the fire.

One by one the visitors dropped off, and still the abbé sat conversing with Henriette. With almost a prejudice against him, she nevertheless acknowledged his conversational powers, and he was both quiet and unassuming.

"Come, general," said Henri, "are you coming? I am engaged:

so are you, I think."

"I had forgotten. We sadly forget what we are, and should be, in such sweet society." As he said this, his eye fell on the abbé, who seemed not to understand his allusion. "I, too, have matter of serious moment to occupy me to-day; à revoir, ladies; Monsieur l'abbé, votre serviteur." And bowing round, he followed Henri.

When he was gone, Paula, who had sat silent, moved towards the couple at the table. The abbé, scarcely looking up, gave her

his chair, and took another.

"You are very busy there, mes nièces," said la comtesse. "Monsieur de Brissac, pray do not let your politeness allow them to weary you: girls are thoughtless."

"It is a pleasure to see scenes that are familiar to us transferred by the pencil," he replied. "I know well many of these places, and now I am once more travelling over them, and in agreeable society."

He coldly glanced at the sisters. Paula had her flower in her.

"You should send that to-day," said Henriette; "Manette will take it; once faded, they will not be able to copy it."

The abbé looked up.

"That is a beautiful flower, Mademoiselle Paula; I always fancy that flowers are like angels' smiles, the loveliest emanations from the spirit of heaven!"

"Henriette," cried la comtesse, "will you go to my dressingroom and bring me down the next two shades to this?" She held

out a piece of worsted.

Her niece rose to do her bidding, and quitted the room.

"It is a pity," continued the abbe, in a low tone, "that the most perfect things minister to our vanity in some way. Everything has its alloy."

"How so, monsieur?" asked Paula, timidly.

"That flower," he said, fixing his lustrous eye on her with startling earnestness, "will pass from your bosom to the hacknied fingers of a fleuriste, beneath whose touch the hues that heaven painted will wither. Then cotton or wax leaves, whose colouring is poison, will imitate it, and the wretched artificial thing will be placed in your hair for fools to admire, who cannot see that a perfect work needs no adornment."

She could not reply.

"Have I offended you?" he asked.

"Oh, no, indeed not. There is too much truth in all you have said. I shall not wear the flower in my hair." ĸ 2

He bent his eyes on the sketch he held. "It is a sweet flower." he continued, and again his eye rested intently on hers. might cheer an hour of solitude to meditate on its beauties, and to call up visions of the land where perhaps it grew wild amidst thousands of its companions. Poor flower! emblem of the lonely man and lonelier heart!"

"Take it," said Paula, laying the flower before him, "and do not let it die for want of care; you have made it seem a living thing to me." Her eyes were suffused with tears.

"I accept it," he whispered, as he placed it in his bosom with a trembling hand. "You would not see it die unsheltered, neglected, a mere sacrifice to vanity. Believe me, there is life in everything—even in this mute flower." He laid a hand, a trembling one, on hers, and rose hastily.

"Are you leaving us?" cried la comtesse, who had so exhausted

herself with talking to her guests that she was almost asleep.
"Yes, madame," he replied, bowing. "I fear I have tired mademoiselle's patience." He bent his earnest gaze on Paula, bowed, and was gone.

"Where is Paula?" asked her sister, entering the room some

short time afterwards.

"There, talking to the abbé," cried la comtesse, arousing herself from her doze and looking round. "Dear me, no, she's gone—and he is gone too! how very odd!" And she rubbed her eyes with her handkerchief to quicken their perception.

CHAPTER XXXI.

On the day following the scene we have just described, at the early hour of eight o'clock in the morning, two men stood in the centre avenue of the Tuileries gardens, partially concealed by a large tree. One of these was General de la Valerie; the other the commissionaire whom we have already seen as the bearer of the mysterious box to Madame Lagrange.

'You are certain," asked the former, "you should know the person again who gave you that parcel to carry to the Rue Jacob?"

"Quite sure, mon bourgeois; I could not mistake him among a

"Now," said his employer, "keep a sharp look out, and tell me when the man who sent you passes this avenue.'

" Oui, monsieur," and he scanned every face from behind his tree. "Do you see him?" asked the general, as figure after figure passed.

"Non, monsieur, pas lui," was the reply.

They stood there a quarter of an hour. The general was closely muffled in his cloak, which concealed him from common observation; they moved to the terrace near the Rue de Rivoli. Here another quarter of an hour elapsed; many a tall man passed,

even at that early hour, and cold as it was. Of all the porter had the same answer to give, shaking his head, "pas lui!"

The general moved on towards another part of the gardens, stopping at the bottom of the steps leading to the terrace, overlooking the Place de la Concorde. He threw his cloak over his left shoulder, à l'Espagnol, drawing it well across him; and the more effectually to conceal his identity, he slouched his hat still more over his eyes. He knew that it was on this terrace the person he sought was accustomed to walk: he had only taken the man elsewhere to prove the accuracy of his memory.

"Now," he said, "montons ici." And they ascended the steps. cautiously looking around. It was more difficult here to conceal themselves; there were fewer trees. At last he found a sheltered

spot. "Is that the man?" he inquired, in a whisper, as one or two

passed them.

"Non." answered the other, decidedly, but in a disappointed

" Pas encore."

"Tenez. Monsieur!" he exclaimed, after a few moments' silence, in a joyous accent, energetically laying his hand on the other's arm; "le voilà;" and with a slow, measured step, in deep thought, his eves on the ground, the Abbé de Brissac passed enveloped in his cloak.

"Hah!" ejaculated his companion, in a tone which denoted extreme satisfaction at his own sagacity. "You are certain!"

"Je mettrais ma main au feu!" answered the commissionaire.

delighted.

"Go!" said the other, placing a piece of gold in his hand, with a card, on which was written a fictitious name and address: "and should that person employ you again, enclose me that card, and you will see me an hour afterwards. Be faithful, and I will reward you."

The man bowed low, and departed.

The abbé passed again, just as the general was preparing to retire from his hiding-place. A woman, closely wrapped, quickly brushed by He drew back. She advanced towards the abbé.

"A rendezvous, eh?" said the general to himself softly. The woman gained de Brissac's side, and laid a gentle hand on his arm. He started, and turned towards her—he was opposite where the general was concealed. The abbé seemed perfectly amazed: a few words passed, and they moved towards a bench, and seated themselves; as they did so, she raised her veil, and Monsieur de la Valerie started with surprise as he beheld the pale, agitated countenance of Madame de Rouvray!

"Now," thought the general, "would I give half I possess to be within ear-shot! Can it be? But no, it is too absurd. What a

preposterous idea!"

The two sat for some moments in deep and earnest conversation, then rising, they moved away together. The general crept after

They descended the steps, gained the place, and the abbé, calling

a fiacre, both got in.

"If this be not a dream," said the general, rubbing his eyes, "the world's gone mad!" Calling another voiture, he entered it. "Follow that one," he said, designating the abbe's, which moved

alowly away.

Street after street was passed. At last the first voiture stopped near the Eglise de St. R. . The two descended, and the flacre. at the abbe's bidding, drew up at a short distance, and waited. Monsieur de Brissac walked on before, and going to a side door of the church, he and his closely-veiled companion entered.

The general laughed aloud.
"I came," he said, "to verify a suspicion, and am thrown into a mase of perplexity. Madame de Rouvray—what can she want there? has the mother seen?—and is she endeavouring to lead the leader of so many? If so, she will lose her time; elle perdra son latin, with this smooth spoken scholar. Ah! Monsieur de Brissac, le saint homme! je le tien enfin! Such a man as this de Brissac throws a slur on a thousand excellent fellows!" How easily we can denounce others' faults, and commit the very same ourselves.

He had totally forgotten his mentioning at Madame Lagrange's, that the abbé walked on the terrace every morning from eight to nine. A quick ear had caught that piece of intelligence; a sorrowing heart retained it; and knowing the many obstacles in her path to the one where she hoped for consolation, Madame de Rouvray had risen, while her daughters slept, and had stolen forth to seek

the abbé in his morning walk.

Henriette had risen from her bed, and was on the point of ringing for Amélie, when her door opened, and Manette, pale and agitated, stood before her.

"Merciful Heavens!" exclaimed Henriette, in alarm, "what has

occurred?"

"Madame," sobbed Manette, "madame has gone out alonewhere I know not. The concierge tells me she left home before eight o'clock, and now it is past nine. She has not returned. What shall I do? what shall I do?" And the faithful creature wrung her hands in agony.

"Hush!" said Henriette, with livid cheeks and lips, "are you

certain she is not in Paula's room?"

"Oh! no, no," answered Manette, "I have listened at her door: all is still; she is not there.

"Let us go to Henri," cried Henriette, hastily, "he will advise us."

"I left her so calm," sobbed Manette, while Henriette dressed

herself hurriedly; "so tranquil last night."

Henriette was too frightened to weep: she felt cold as death. "Come," she whispered, and they crept unobserved down the stairs to Henri's room. A fresh trouble awaited them there: his bed had not been slept in, and no answer was returned to their call.

"I will remain here, Manette," said Henriette; "I cannot remount those stairs:" she had sunk almost lifeless on a seat.

"Bring me my bonnet and shawl."

"Monsieur l'abbé's?" exclaimed Manette; "fool that I was not

to think of that; she has gone there, he has been her constant

thought of late," and she rushed from the room.

Scarcely had she done so, when the door opened and Henri entered, pale, and with a disordered aspect. He started back when he beheld his sister. "You here?" he cried, "you?" and he staggered to a seat.

"Henri," she answered, almost inarticulately, rising with difficulty, "are these your promises? You, who should be the guardian of all, desert us—desert your once noble self! My mother,

my poor mother!" and she wept bitterly.

"Gracious Heavens!" he exclaimed, suddenly sobered, "what of her?"

She briefly related all she knew and suspected.

"Oh, villain that I am!" he ejaculated. "Double villain to you, and all who are dear to me. Oh! would I were dead!" And

he dropped into his chair.

"Come," expostulated Henriette, taking his arm; "rouse yourself, my dear brother; come with us—she must be found. Manette," she cried, addressing her, for at that moment she entered, "Henri will accompany me. We will seek her. You stay and tranquillize Paula, poor child!" And she hastily threw on her shawl and bonnet, and quitted the apartment, followed by the weeping Manette.

As they entered the passage, a figure passed. Henriette, uttering a cry, intercepted her, and threw her arms around her mother.

'Maman." she exclaimed; "oh, thank Heaven, you have re-

turned!"

Madame de Rouvray could not speak; she seemed bewildered; but she clung to her child, and then, pushing her from her, flung herself on Manette's bosom, and sobbed like an infant. "Get her up stairs," whispered Manette; "no one can have

discovered us vet."

"Do not come now, Henri," said his sister, in a low tone, "Let

me see you in an hour's time."

He drew back, and closed his door. She shuddered as he did Her heart, ever anxious for her brother, could not but be sensible of the state of him she so dearly loved. He had sought forgetfulness of some heavy troubles in wine.

Madame de Rouvray was in her room once more with Manette. and Henriette entered her own softly. As she closed the door, a

voice met her ear.

"Mademoiselle has risen early," said Amélie, with a sneering smile; "and been out, too, apparently only half dressed."

"Leave me," said Henriette, with forced calmness; "I will dress

alone this morning."

The woman looked astonished when she quitted the apartment. When she was dressed, she hastened to her mother's room; Manette opened the door, and then motioning to her to be silent, came out on to the landing.

"You must not see her now," she said, in great agitation; "the time is come when you must be told all. I wish I had sooner done so; but it may not be too late yet: go to your room, ma fille, after breakfast, and I will come to you."

Henriette pressed her kind hand, and withdrew.

There was no one in the breakfast-room but Paula. Amélie came in with a request that Henriette would come to her aunt's room as soon as she had finished her morning meal.

"You will not go to Madame Lagrange's to-day?" asked Hen-

riette; "I cannot leave home."

"Oh no!" cried Paula, hastily, "I do not think I shall ever go there again."

"Never go there again? and Edgar's miniature?"

"Oh, he must wait; perhaps I may—I don't know," and she arose hurriedly. Henriette looked on her amazed. Before, however, she could speak, Bastien opened the door and brought in a letter.

"For Mademoiselle Paula," he said.

"From Edgar!" she cried, in a tone of pleasure, yet the moment after, her face grew sad and anxious as she broke the seal. "He is coming!" she exclaimed, in a tone of delight, after perusing a few lines: "oh, thank Heaven! thank Heaven! Read, read," she said, with eager joy.

Henriette took the letter. Edgar was coming, but only for a few days. Some regimental affairs, requiring the presence of an officer in Paris, his colonel, "a bon garçon," he said, had sent him,

knowing how he was circumstanced.

"I shall be with you nearly as soon as my letter," he concluded. "Thank Heaven, indeed!" exclaimed Henriette; "now we shall have some one to advise with; some one to speak to my poor dear brother! Now I can go to my aunt more cheerfully: I know I shall have a lecture there."

She embraced her sister, who had become immersed in a deep

reverie, and quitted the salon.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"I have sent for you, Mademoiselle de Rouvray," said her aunt, in a stately tone, as her niece seated herself, on a cold wave of the lady's hand, in signal of her wishes, "to inform you once for all that, while you remain in my house, I will have my orders respected: I am really amazed at all I hear. If your mother chooses to introduce her English manners, and run about like a grisette, I will not allow my nieces to follow her example."

"Madame," answered Henriette, somewhat stung by the

"Madame," answered Henriette, somewhat stung by the haughtiness of her aunt's manner, "pray do not allow the misrepresentations of a worthless woman like Amélie to make you unjust and cruel—for cruel it is to speak thus of a suffering mother to her child. To you, being my father's sister, I am unable to

resent it as I would to a stranger."

"Do you mean to say," replied her aunt, "that it is correct for

you to rush down half-dressed to your brother's room, at eight

o'clock in the morning?"

"You do not-cannot know the motive which took me there." pleaded her niece. "My poor mother had left the hôtel alone this morning: to whom should I apply for assistance if not to my brother?"

"I am sure," answered the other, "it would be far better to place your mother in some Maison de Santé; she is little better

than half-witted!"

Henriette sprang up. "Place my mother in a Maison de Santé!" she exclaimed; "never, while I can protect her."

"There, sit down," cried her aunt, more gently. "I did not mean to hurt your feelings; you always take things up so hastily. I am sure I am a miserable woman;" and she began whimpering: always her resource when she thought she had said or done wrong. Henriette resumed her chair, but did not speak; she was at length resolved to terminate these scenes, occasioned by Amélie. Her aunt continued to whimper, snatching stolen glances at her niece. who sat calm and pale, looking in the fire.
"I cannot imagine," said la comtesse, "whom you take after in

your temper. Your father is not sullen; and your poor mother, poor soul," (she said poor soul in a softened tone,) "she is weak and nervous. I don't think her health good, but certainly she is

not sulky."

"God knows she is not," sighed Henriette.
"Then why are you?" asked her aunt. "It is most strange that you resemble neither of your parents, and shocking that you

should be undutiful and cruel towards me.

"I have no wish to annoy you, madame," said Henriette, calmly. "but I am no child; unfortunately I am older than my years, for I have had much to try me, and I cannot consent to be made any longer a tool of by a base woman like Amélie, for purposes of her own.

"I am sure, Henriette, Amélie loves you dearly; she always calls you cette chère demoiselle. It is your mother she blames.

"And how dare she blame my mother?" cried her niece, proudly and indignantly: "how dare she blame? And you, madame,—

pardon my saying so,-should not allow her to do so.

Never was woman more amazed or entrapped than la comtesse. She had sent for Henriette to lecture her, and now she found the tables turned, and she had not a word to say; somehow she felt her niece was right: there is a monitor in every breast.

"But she did it for your good," insinuated her aunt.

"Is it for my good her encouraging my brother in his wildness, and inducing him to receive persons he should not permit to call upon him?" and she related the circumstance of the visit on Sunday, and Amélie coming out of his rooms.

You are wrong, ma nièce," said la comtesse; "Amélie told me that, knowing Henri was not well, she had been to ask him if he would have a bouillon; and seeing the general there she thought

you would not like to enter."

Henriette saw how vain was the hope of opposing successfully such profound cunning. She was silent a few moments, and then rising, said, "Excuse me, madame, but I must go to my mother."

This, however, did not suit her aunt.

"Stop, ma nièce; let us understand each other."

And the explanation resulted in Henriette's making her aunt understand, that as her father was not at hand to take charge of his family, and as her mother was too ill, and la comtesse too nervous (she called it so) to bear anxiety or annoyance, she (Henriette) must be allowed unquestioned to watch over those who needed her attention. Something she mentioned of her uneasiness about

Henri, and of a mystery she could not fathom.

"There," cried her aunt, when Henriette had spoken her mind; and she patted her cheek; "you are a mechante enfant; but I suppose I must spoil you too. I will say no more; only keep your maman from the wild trick of running out at all hours, and I allow you to watch over mon cher neveu, but not too closely; men will be men. I assure you—"la comtesse was continuing, but at that moment the door opened, and Amélie looked in, smiling.

"Pardon, mademoiselle, but Madame Manette is anxious to

speak with you, chez vous."

Henriette hurried to her room, where she found Manette await-

ing her, in visible agitation.

"Well," asked the former, "how is maman? Is she more composed? May I not go to her?"

"No, ma fille. No; I must speak with you before you see your mother. You have much to hear: then you will be prepared for all!"

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Henriette, "you terrify me!"

"No one can hear us?" asked Manette, looking round.

"No," answered the other, closing and locking the door. "We are safe now. But maman; how have you left her?"

"Oh, more tranquil—much more tranquil."

They sat for some moments in silence beside the fire.

"The first of my story refers to a long time ago," began

Manette.

"I was a young girl, a young orphan, and very poor, when your maman took me; she was a belle jeune fille de quinze ans. I was twenty. I had been employed to do some needlework for the young English lady; one of the many then at Verdun. Your grandfather was a détenu there, a widower with this one child. I often used to wonder how so austere a man could be father to so gentle a creature as your mother.

"Her father had come abroad very early to have her educated: why, I cannot imagine, for he hated France and everything French. It was not from economy, at any rate, for he was well off. However, he was detained at Verdun during the war, and there I

entered your mother's service.

"She was in her twenty-first year when she met your father; he was staying with some friends near Clermont, only a few leagues from Verdun, and every day came to the town. He knew

almost every one there, and though they were most of them prisoners, as they called them, it was a gay lively place. There were parties almost every evening, and your mother was the belle

of these—she was indeed the belle!

"Monsieur le baron, your father, went everywhere with her, and it was evident that their love was mutual. He proposed for her; but what hope was there of her father's consent? 'No,' he said, (and I believe him) 'he would rather see her dead, than married to a Frenchman!' Your mother was of a gentle disposition, and timid; but her love for him—that never wavered. She would give up hours of pleasure for five minutes with him.

"At last peace was proclaimed, and one of the first to leave was your grandfather. He had money at command; he was not like many who lingered in a foreign land for years, in debt, unable to depart. Her father wished me to be left behind, but your mother begged so hard, that at last he consented, and we

sailed for England. A month after the baron followed us.

"Strange events happened in that month. A cousin of your grandfather fell in love with mademoiselle—a Monsieur Waldron. He was nearly as old as her father; they had been boys together at college; and when we came to England, he was almost always at the hall in Warwickshire on a visit. Mademoiselle could not bear him-I do not wonder at that: it was not his age alone, but his temper-his disposition, which was cold and despotic. Well; they urged her to marry this old man: but notwithstanding the dread she entertained of her father, she still held out. And thus matters stood, when the baron arrived in England. He came to her father and once again implored his consent to their union, but he only laughed derisively, and scornfully rejected him.

"'She is engaged to Monsieur Waldron,' he said. Your mother prayed—oh prayed as the weakest woman will pray, when she really loves. I saw how things would terminate, -I saw it in her father's eyes,—and the preparations went on for the marriage. Mademoiselle was by this time of age. I urged, I did it out of a true regard for her welfare,—I urged her to fly with the baron; but she durst not. The baron, too, on his part was obstinate; that,

and his pride, lost them.

"'If she really loves me,' he said, 'at the last moment she will refuse, and boldly proclaim her affection.'

"I pointed out how extremely timid she was, and how completely

under control.

"'Mine shall be the triumph,' he said, 'of seeing her, even at the altar, dare all for me.'

"But I knew she would not have courage to do this; for her

courage failed as the time approached for exercising it.

"Monsieur le baron was obliged to return to France on business. I contrived a meeting for them, which was but for half an hour.

"'I know, Marie,' said Monsieur le baron, when they parted, 'nothing will make you forsake me, and in time your father will consent!

"From that moment your mother's peace of mind was gone. Could I tell you all I have known her suffer, you would wonder how she could have lived during twenty years. A harsh look, an unkind word from your father, would have killed her; but these she never had; no, he was all devotion and love towards her, even when his mind was tortured by an unjust suspicion, which has been to your mother a heavy retribution—and yet he never said a harsh word to her. Stern he may be, circumstances have made him so; but love and respect him, ma fille, as you have always done. He deserves it.

"What for years weighed heaviest on your mother's mind, was the forsaking her boy; I thought at times her dwelling on it would have driven her mad. Communication between the two countries then was not what it is now; but we heard from time to time during several years, that Monsieur Waldron was leading a very profligate life, and that he had sent his son to be educated

in Germany.

"But let me take up the thread of my history. After your mother's flight, we crossed to Havre. There the baron waited, expecting Monsieur Waldron would follow. However, the first thing he heard was that Monsieur Waldron had commenced proceedings to obtain a divorce. This brought a ray of something like joy to your mother's heart; her marriage to Monsieur Waldron annulled, she could marry your father. Under these circumstances, we once more returned to England, and while proceedings were pending, resided in the closest retirement not far from Dover, to be near the coast.

"I will pass over the few succeeding months. There seemed to be unnecessary delays in obtaining the divorce. I think, and so did they, that Monsieur Waldron purposely threw obstacles in the way to add poignancy to your mother's sufferings. Be that as it may, seven long tedious months passed, and she was still in the eyes of the law the wife of Monsieur Waldron. As time lingered on, your parents grew more and more impatient. One day your father had gone to London, to hurry on the business, if possible, though it was not in his power to do so. It was a little more than seven months after the night of their elepement.

"Your father, as I have said, had gone to London; your poor mother and I were sitting together; she had been ill and nervous all day. It was about six in the evening when we heard a ring at the outer gate, the gate of the garden which surrounded the cottage. Thinking it was your father, she ran to meet him; when her father, whom she had not seen for months before her elopement, confronted her. I shall never forget that scene: she cowered before him in terror, as he stood gazing on her in silent but expressive malignity. But his silence was of no long continuance; his rage burst forth, and he cursed her in language the most fearful, for the disgrace she had brought upon them. He imprecated that all she loved dearest might be the source of misery to her. And when she lay nearly senseless at his feet, he turned and quitted the house.

"That night your mother gave premature birth to yourself and your brother.'

Manette paused some moments in deep affliction.

"I often thought," she continued, taking Henriette's hand fondly. "that that curse had fallen on you, poor innocent children; for your birth was the first misery—I may say the only one -between your parents. I could read his thoughts, and nothing has ever removed the belief from his mind that you were Monsieur Waldron's children; then as you grew so fair, both of you, and so unlike him, his suspicions became more confirmed, and despite himself, he turned from you both. Oh, ma bonne Henriette! when you feel pained by your father's harshness, forgive it and feel for him."

"I will never blame him again. My poor father!" exclaimed Henriette, with emotion. "Oh that I could teach him to love

me!"

Manette shook her head sorrowfully. "It never can; for as if, demon-like, he knew your father's thought and suspicions, Monsieur Waldron wrote to him after his marriage, resigning all claim, as he said, 'to his children.' The words sank deep in his mind; they have lain and rankled for upwards of nineteen vears.

"Now, my Henriette, you know all! Paula he loves, for she is the image of himself; he knows her to be his own child, and as surely are you and Henry his children; but nothing now will

make him believe it.

"And Monsieur Waldron?" asked Henriette.

"He lives. I believe; that is, he was living a few years since. They do not seek to know, for to both it is a painful subject: the baron cannot bear an allusion to Monsieur Waldron's child, and now your poor mother never names him to Monsieur; but she often thinks, I know, of that last scene; for sometimes after a long silence she will clasp her hands, and looking piteously in my face, exclaim, 'Oh, Manette! how he stretched his little hands to me for help.

"Oh, would to Heaven I could comfort her: my poor mother,"

exclaimed Henriette, as tears coursed down her cheeks.

"All that we can now do," said Manette, in conclusion, "is to prevent her seeing Monsieur l'abbé: should she seek consolation from him, I foresee sorrow and trouble for us all. You will think this a strange thing for me to say, who profess the abbe's religion, but your mother has duties on earth, which she would abandon should she forsake her religion. Were all the circumstances made known to the abbé, he might exhort, and in a manner compel her to leave her husband and children.

"Merciful Heaven!" exclaimed Henriette, in terror, "that would drive my father mad! What is to be done, ma bonne?"

"She must be kept from meeting the abbé until Monsieur le baron comes. I have again, and more fully written to him to-day. If he do but come, all may be well."
"Heaven grant he may," exclaimed Henriette.

"Now," said Manette, rising, "let all I have said be religiously confined to your own breast. Do not name it to the others."

"Oh no; it would kill Paula! poor little Paula," answered her

sister.

"Heaven bless you, mon enfant; ma pauvre fille!" and kissing her affectionately, she directed her steps to Madame de Rouvray's apartment.

But there was another who left Henriette's room at the same moment—Amélie, who had concealed herself in the alcove where the bed was placed. She had entered by a small door in the passage, which admitted her to the back of the bed, and had heard

every syllable of the conversation that had passed.

"Not to la comtesse," she muttered to herself, "shall I tell this. La folle would not know the value of it—but to Monsieur le général! He is rich and generous!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

AMELIE, whose aim in all she did was a sordid one, and who believed she had obtained possession of a profitable secret, forthwith set about the accomplishment of her schemes. After an interview with the general, the purport of which may be surmised, she went by his desire to St. R——, and waited until an opportunity occurred of seeing the abbé, before whom that woman, devoid of all religious belief, knelt, and, with an assumption of contrition, pleaded forgiveness for the fault she had been led into, as she said, by curiosity.

Under the plea that her conscience could not support the responsibility of so weighty a secret, she informed him of the efforts which were being made to prevent a meeting between himself and Madame de Rouvray, whose salvation was at stake. She implored him, therefore, to seek and save one crying to him for aid. The case being thus forcibly placed before him, he felt it to be his duty

to respond to that appeal of a contrite sinner.

The Abbé de Brissac, as we have before stated, had entered the Church from conscientious motives. His life had been one of stern, unswerving duty. He could scarcely sympathize with faults and sins that had never found reception in his own heart. He was not the lowly Christian who prayed to be defended against temptation. Strong in the audacity of his own will, he stood on a self-erected pedestal, and defied sin to assail him!

In Madame de Rouvray he saw a sinner to be saved. He did not pause to inquire how far he was justified in carrying misery and despair to the household hearth. What were worldly ties and affections to one who could not comprehend their force? He had sacrificed all when he entered on the path which he conceived he towards heaven, and his whole soul was filled with the spirit of proselytism. Misled by a wily woman, who was using him as her tool, he fell into the snare, and readily undertook to gain to his

own Church the already half-converted woman. Amélie was to receive and introduce him to Madame de Rouvray's apartment.

He was too proud to enter the hôtel of la comtesse surreptitiously. He would go openly as an ecclesiastic, entitled to respect, and seek an interview with the penitent.

Amélie, however, felt that her ingenuity was to be exercised in

making the way clear.

Manette, the faithful but single-minded creature, was lured to Henri's apartment, under the pretence that her exhortations might help to reclaim him: and while Henriette sat in forced composure, with her aunt and sister au salon, the abbé was received with seeming openness by Amélie and Bastien, who watched for him, and introduced him into the apartment of the desponding Madame

de Rouvrav.

No feeling of weakness—of human pity—came into that man's heart, after he had heard her confession. Stern and unbending, he absolutely refused to admit the kneeling convert into the bosom of his church, from whose ministration she hoped for peace in this world and salvation in the next, unless all earthly ties were severed. Husband she had none, he averred: he bade her turn from all human affections, and, unloosing the ties of twenty long years, forget that they had ever been.

As she spoke of her children, the name of that one who had forced him in self-abasement to pass his nights in vigils, and days in fasting and prayer, because of sinful thoughts which had crept into his hitherto unruffled breast—even that name could not move him.

So strong was the inner man during that interview, that all outward things were as nought. He heard, but felt not, and, standing erect in all the severity of spiritual pride, he dared her to relapse again into sin.

Thus he stood, and thus knelt the penitent, as Henriette directed her steps to her mother's room, unable any longer to restrain her

feelings.

She gently opened the door, and started aghast when she beheld the abbé. Her mother shrank from her, as she entered. Henriette flew towards her, and encircling her in her arms, seemed as though she would shield her from every evil of the world in that fond embrace.

Monsieur de Brissac stood with folded arms, looking on, pale

and immovable.

"Look up, maman," cried Henriette, tenderly; "your child is here to support you."

The mother answered not; but with one arm round her child,

fixed her earnest, imploring look on the abbé.

"Mademoiselle de Rouvray," he said, in a cold and resolved tone, "a soul in pain sought me. I have acted from my own sense of right, unhesitatingly and conscientiously; less, I could not do."

"I do not accuse you, monsieur," she answered, still encircling her mother with her arms, "but if you know all, you will feel the utter ruin which must ensue, should she fly to your church as a refuge." "Do you know all?" he asked. "I think I do." she replied.

"You?" exclaimed her mother, with wild, dilated eves. "and

from whom ?"

"One who witnessed all, maman degrest; one who truly loves you, as I do, and knows the trials you have had to pass through." "It is needless my remaining," said the abbé, moving towards

the door. "I have done my duty; I seek none, but if they call

on me for help, I must accord it—it is my duty to do so."

"Henriette," cried her mother, trembling with emotion, "if you would not see me the most abject, the most lost of human beings, do not let the abbé leave me thus, without spiritual comfort; I feel that my only happiness on earth lies in his power to grant."

He turned back. "It is my duty," he said, "to respond to the voice which calls to me; I am here to save, if she will—the alternative lies with herself. The world, or her soul!"
"Oh, Monsieur l'abbé!" implored Henriette. "Take into your

thoughts those who will indeed be lost without their mother.

Think of us,—of her poor children."
"I have thought," he answered. "There is no middle path between right and wrong-no line between them. It must be one or the other."

"But," urged Henriette, in her anguish, "if the laws have

sanctioned her marriage why should you reject them?"

"Simply because in my faith no woman can be the wife of two men. Prove to me her first husband is dead, and gladly will I sanction her union with your father."

"He lives! he lives!" cried the wretched woman, clasping her

hands.

"Then my mission here is ended," replied he, moving towards

"Entreat him for me," whispered her mother, with quivering lips. Henriette loosed her grasp, and overtaking the abbé before he

reached the door, laid a hand on his arm.

"Monsieur," she said, in a low, tremulous tone, "I beseech you think seriously of this! If my poor mother feels that her only happiness on earth is to be found in your church, think what that church may bestow of pardon for her long and deeply-repented fault—oh, think! It is not for myself I plead," she continued, in deep affliction; "I would suffer willingly, but for the others-my brother, who so much needs all our care, and Paula, my poor Paula! Do not brand them with infamy, casting them forth without a name, or a sullied one."

His brow contracted, and his lips moved. She saw it, and mistaking the cause, thought she had in some way enlisted his feelings in their behalf. She grasped his hand: it was cold as death.

"Oh!" she uttered, the tears starting down her cheeks. are moved, pause before you condemn. High as you stand, virtuous, religious as you are, an hour of temptation may reach you; and as you hope for mercy, be merciful to my dearest mother.'

He shook off the momentary thought which oppressed him, and raising his eyes, fixed them on her sorrowing face. His tall figure

was drawn up to its fullest height.

"If," he coldly replied, "temptation should assail me, I shall meet it, not with mortal strength—that would be as a reed, and would bend beneath me; but with the Spirit, and with the strong resolution which that Spirit gives! I will meet, defy, and destroy it."

"We know not till we are tried," she answered, releasing his arm, and drawing back: "It may find or leave you weaker than this weak woman, strong as you deem yourself."

"I will await it then with joy," he cried, "and glory in the trial from which I shall come forth a conqueror." He turned and quitted the room, leaving Madame de Rouvray prostrated with the fearful struggle she had undergone.

Her child sat by and vainly endeavoured to soothe her: Manette came and mingled her prayers with that noble-hearted girl's: but all was vain; she turned from them and wept in hopeless wretched-

ness.

The evening of that wretched day came at last. Henri was

gloomy, avoiding all private conversation with his sister.

Every one had retired early on various pleas, for all had some cause of discomfort. Paula had dismissed Amélie, and sat alone brooding over many things; no longer the light-hearted, laughing girl. At that hour her sister and Manette sought Henri's room. the former having made up her mind to question him, and know the worst.

They entered—he was not there: it was scarcely eleven.

"We will wait for him, ma bonne," said Henriette; "we will seat

ourselves by the fire; he will surely return early to-night."

So saying, she drew near the stove, and with the tongs commenced raking together the scattered embers of the nearly extinguished logs. The wood quickly burst into a blaze; there was some half-burnt paper in the ashes; she raised and held it to the flame—a name caught her eye, and a sum of figures. It was not the mean motive, curiosity, which prompted her to take it in her fingers to peruse it. She had seen the general's hand-writing before, and recognised it again. She read—

- your losses more heavy than I imagined; you owe Prévoyal nearly 3000 louis he will be paid or only chance a good coup to-night Frascati's the affair he says must be arranged at once. eleven

I am powerless to assist you she there and

expect you-The rest was illegible or consumed, and even this was difficult to decipher.

Henriette sprang up with a wild and sudden determination.

"Manette," she cried, "I am resolved to save my brother, if it is in woman to do so. It is a duty which has devolved upon me. Only by a vigorous effort can I reclaim him."

"What would you do, my child?" asked the other, in alarm.

"Seek him. as a sister may, in sincerity and anxious affection. even in that den, before it be too late. How can he pay that sum? And the deeper he sinks, the more difficult the task will be. We will go together, Manette—go, and at once." And before the other could argue or reason with her she had quitted the room.

The saloons at Frascati's were brilliantly illuminated. were crowds of anxious, heated faces beneath the glare of the Some looked pale; and the cold dew of despair stood on their brow as the croupier, with an imperturbable air, drew towards him the piles of notes and gold. Some wore a look of intense joy, -the eye danced in its orbit; yet all appeared unnatural-the smile was a grimace; the laugh came from the parched, burning throat, over which the wine gushed only to heat it more, and scorch the brain. There were women, too-young and lovely women—some on whose cheeks the artificial colouring had replaced the freshness of youth and health; others, still almost in their childhood, whose silvery accents rang like a bell upon the ear, as the joyous laugh burst forth; voices which, even in this place, seemed, in their tones of youth and purity, to be best fitted for an earnest appeal—a prayer to Heaven at their mother's knee. Yet there they stood, and encouraged each other in the most irreclaimable vice of all—gambling! And, above all, rose the monotonous cry of "Messieurs, faites votre feu!"

Henriette stood at the entrance to that room. She mentioned her brother's name, without naming her relationship, and the doors flew open. Her veil was thrown back-one more young and lovely, there was an attraction. In vain Manette endeavoured to make her conceal her face. She could not understand; one only

thought was in her mind-of Henri.

And there he sat at a small table. He was flushed and excited. A woman—that much dreaded one—sat beside him, leaning over his chair, and in her hands holding his cards, which he played from. His adversary was a dark, forbidding man, yet with a set smile on his face: at his back stood the general. The game was écarté, As Henriette entered unseen with Manette, she saw the general look fixedly at the woman by Henri's side. She could not see her answering glance; but Henriette directed her eyes to the opposite face, and his eyebrow moved, and a smile of intelligence passed over his countenance. Henriette, forgetting all, except the cause which had brought her thither, stepped forward. Who noticed her in that crowd? She moved like a sorrowing angel amongst the fallen,-pure in the midst of impurity.

"Henri," she said, touching his shoulder. Before she was seen or heard, so intent were they all, his antagonist, marking on a piece of paper before him, said: "That makes three thousand five hundred."

"Yes," ejaculated the other, passing his hand over his heated brow.

"Henri," said his sister, touching his shoulder; "come-come with me!"

The brother sprang from his chair like a madman at that voice:

the general stood aghast. For an instant even he felt awed by her presence there. It was but an instant: some pleasing idea possessed him, for he smiled. The rest were speechless: the woman knew his sister and shrank back.

"You here?" cried Henri, wildly; "you!"

"Mademoiselle de Rouvray," said the general, in a low tone.

"is adventurous."

"She fears nothing," she answered, though her voice belied her words-"nothing but his presence among such as have brought him here." And her voice was articulate and firm, as she gazed contemptuously on the general.

"Permit me, Mademoiselle de Rouvray," said a stranger, stepping forward and lowering her veil, and offering at the same time his arm. "Permit me to lead you hence; this is no place for you."

She looked wildly at the speaker, and recognised the man she had seen at the Opera Comique, in the loge with that woman.

"Back! Monsieur de Brèges," cried Henri, recalled to himself.

"That is my duty."

"I thought," said the other, coldly drawing back, and bowing

low to Henriette, "you had forgotten it."

The reproach sobered him; he turned to Prévoyal, and saying in a calm tone, "à demain monsieur," led his sister from the saloon.

CHAPTER XXXV.

HENRI maintained an almost unbroken silence on their way home. When they arrived there, his sister requested Manette to leave them together, and she then followed him to his room. A most painful explanation took place. One night—he would not say where, but not at Frascati's—at a private house, he had been induced to play with this Prévoyal, and lost a large sum. A few nights after, this man offered him his revanche at Frascati's, and heated by wine after dining with the general, he went. Again Maddened, he returned—again and his losses were increased.

again. The result is known.

It was in vain at first that his sister endeavoured to tranquillize him. After some time, however, he became calmer, and having obtained his solemn promise not to quit the room that night, she prepared to leave, tenderly embracing him, and agreeing to discuss the possibilities of payment with him on the morrow. As he conducted her to the outer door, he drew her to his breast, and fondly kissing her, she felt a tear drop on her cheek. She looked up-his eyes were suffused. "Leave me, Henny, dearest," he cried, "you will see me to-morrow: I am low and feverish tonight; I want rest; and he sighed heavily. Returning his embrace, she withdrew, and heard his heavy step crossing to the inner room. She mounted the stairs, and stopped. "I will return," she thought, "and listen whether he goes to rest." And she descended.

All was still in his room, and all was quiet—suddenly there was a fall, as of some instrument on the uncarpeted floor. The key was in the door, and she gently opened it; it led into the small ante-chamber. A light was in the salon beyond: as she stood. a click fell on her ear-a sharp metallic sound. She sprang across the room, and with one bound reached Henri, who hastily put his hand behind him. He was pale and haggard. She grasped his arm, with difficulty forcing it upwards—it held a pistol. Her knees refused to support her, and she dropped on them to the ground. still holding his arm, to which she clung in agony.

"Oh Henri, my brother!" she cried, "was this your promise?

this your most sinful intention ?"

He turned his head away.

"Henriette." he exclaimed, impetuously, struggling to release the arm to which she clung, "I cannot live disgraced—dishonoured.

How am I to pay my debts?"

"And do you think," she answered, "that your death would wipe away your dishonour? What voice would then be raised in defence of your memory? mine would be powerless. What act of others could redeem your coward one of flying from the consequences of the deed you have wilfully though thought lessly committed? No. my brother," she cried as she arose, her figure dilating, and her beautiful countenance full of a noble excitement, "live!" and she encircled him with her arms; "live, and wash away the blot. It is as yet no deep stain on your name: defy those who have led you to this. and rely on one who will again save you, if it be in woman's power. Be your noble self once more!"

The pistol dropped on the floor with a dull, heavy sound: and putting his arm around her, and his head on her shoulder, he burst into tears of deep and sincere contrition, trembling with

convulsive emotion.

"My own devoted sister," he said, "if I can but free myself from this, oh!"—and he raised his hand to heaven in a silent appeal-" not pleasure, nor society, impulse, or solicitation, shall ever make me so err again!"

"May heaven record that vow, and give you strength to keep it!" she ejaculated; "and for the debt, to-morrow will be time to think of that. Rest now my brother: I leave you in confidence;

you would not deceive me again, I know!"
"No, on my sacred soul!" he exclaimed—"that soul which you have saved! It will be counted to you, Henriette, at the last! Take these." he added, placing the deadly weapons in her hand, "let me never see them till I am a man; to-night I have been unworthy of that name." He strained her to his breast, and she departed perfectly assured that he would keep his word: but her heart was full of deep sorrow.

Before she quitted her room next morning, a note was brought

to her from Henri, saying:

"Do not alarm yourself at my absence, my beloved sister. I am going out early to see what can be done in this wretched affair. Amélie, to whom everything was known, discovered Henriette's absence the previous night, but for purposes of her own, concealed her knowledge from la comtesse. She, however, went out early, and on her return, having received her instructions from the general, sought that lady's room. There had been a great distance and reserve on the woman's part towards the comtesse. Amélie's policy was to prejudice la comtesse against Henri. She dreaded his influence in a quarter where she purposed reigning supreme. But this was a thing that had need be warily done, for Henri was

a great favourite with his aunt. Full of these thoughts and intentions, she entered la comtesse's dressing-room that morning. She was more gracious, and the delighted lady was charmed to see her servant in a communicative mood. "She could not." she said. "bear to see her beloved mistress imposed upon, and she knew it would be attempted. The fact was. Monsieur Henri had a maîtresse who was endeavouring to ruin him." (She had been strictly ordered not to speak of, but on the contrary, if necessary, strongly deny his gambling.) had been trying to raise money on bills, and failing, had persuaded cette chère Mademoiselle Henriette that he owed a large sum in debts of honour, whereas the general had watched over him like a father, and had prevented that. She had it from his valet! valets would talk! She thought mademoiselle was going to ask her aunt for a large sum that day for him, and it would (if it were given) only go to this woman, &c."

The comtesse again and again thanked her "treasure," and promised amply to reward her fidelity. Just then Henriette begged for admission. A sleepless night had decided her, in the first instance, to implore her aunt to save Henri, and candidly to make every particular known to her. With this determination she entered her aunt's room. Amélie had implored secresy, which is comtesse faithfully kept, turning a deaf ear to all the prayers of her niece, who durst not mention her visit to Frascati's. The other fearful scene was unknown to Amélie, and Henriette on her part could not think of it without horror. Retiring with a heavy heart from the room, she saw that her only course was to write to

her father.

In the midst of her anxious reflections, Henri returned. He looked considerably more hopeful, although as yet he had arranged nothing. But Prévoyal had given him four days, and much might be done in that time.

After some conversation he again left home, to "see the general,"

he said. "He had not found him at home that morning."

The general had his own motives for ordering that he should be denied to Henri. Things must soon now be brought to a crisis.

Henriette was in her own room writing to her father, detailing everything; and without mentioning names, stating how her poor brother had been led into temptation, and how sincere was his repentance—still concealing his first debt, from the consequences of which she had saved him.

It was a letter which could not have failed to move him, had it reached him unaccompanied by another, but the same post brought him a letter from his sister, speaking of Henri's "natural faults of youth," as she termed them; and begging him if appealed to, not to afford any pecuniary assistance to him, since it would only entangle him with a designing woman.

This letter had the effect of rendering the baron still more severe in his judgment of the twins. He looked upon both as endeavouring to dupe him, and his heart steeled itself against them.

While Henriette was writing her letter, Edgar arrived. She was not present at the interview with Paula, who had been in a state of unusual agitation from the moment of receiving his letter, in which he had announced his intended visit.

"Henriette," he exclaimed, after the first salutation, "what have you been doing? too much raking, and Parisian gaieties, I fear.

My dearest sister, you look pale and ill."

"I am well, Edgar," she replied, smiling. "But there is not exactly the quiet of the country here; we lose our roses in great

"And Paula, too; I cannot understand her!" he said thoughtfully: "she seems feverish and unsettled-I wish she had never

visited Paris."

"I wish we had none of us ever come; Edgar. Oh! how I miss

your dear uncle. Have you heard from him lately?"

"Yes, and he is counting the moments until your return. When will that be?"

"Alas! I cannot say; but I hope soon."

"And when I come there, Henriette, shall we not renew our pleasant happy walks?"

"I trust so, Edgar;" and the blood rose to her pale cheek.
"Why do you blush, Henriette? Do you know, dear sister," and he faintly smiled, "I may tell you now—so volatile and variable is the human heart, and so prone to selfish vanity—that I loved you once, more than I did Paula. But my love was different; she had ever been as a dear innocent child to me. You I should have worshipped; you were so exalted in all things, so noble, so perfect —that is, I should thus have loved you, had you loved me. I was vain enough to think once, you did so, until Paula undeceived me; and then the dear girl so artlessly betrayed her love, saying you had seen our affection and approved it. Your own words confirmed this, and my heart then set up its hope where it has been fully recompensed; and the boy's love for you became all the man's for Paula. Poor inconsistent beings that we are! We may laugh at ourselves, may we not? I have often intended telling you this, that you might ridicule my vanity; it were its just punishment. Do laugh, Henriette ?" He raised his eyes to hers as he concluded, for he had been looking down. She did not laugh, she had fainted in her chair,

Edgar sprang up alarmed; but before he could summon assist-

arce. Paula entered.

"What is this?" she cried, pillowing her sister's head on her shoulder; "what has alarmed her?"

"I know not, indeed," answered he, and his lip trembled; "she

is much fatigued I think, and her poor mother's state affects her spirits."

"Of what were you speaking?" asked Paula, offering the flacon

to Henriette, who was slowly reviving.

"Of—of—indeed I scarcely know; of des Ormes, I think.

"That always saddens poor Henriette!" and she softly kissed the forehead of the reviving girl. Life returned, and with it she found another drop added to her cup of misery. Edgar had loved her! but what was he now? Paula's beloved and darling fiance! and long after sense returned, she thought on all this with closed eyes that durst not open to look on him. When she did so, her heart in mercy ceased its tumultuous beating. She was enabled to say, with seeming calmness, that her fainting had been caused by over-fatigue. After awhile she spoke of events most foreign to her thoughts, and reclining on the couch, conversed with them of balls, and pleasures, past and to come. She did this, lest he should detect her secret. Alas! alas! until we prove it, we little know all our mere mortal hearts can bear, and be schooled to, without breaking.

"You are going to a ball at Madame de Verneuil's to-night, I

hear," said Edgar, "I would I could accompany you."
"You must," exclaimed Paula, "Henri shall take you."

"Oh! thanks, dearest!" he replied, "I could not have borne to lose a night of your society, my time will be so brief in Paris. I

suppose you must go?"

"Oh! yes," answered Henriette; "my aunt has insisted upon it. By the way," she continued, changing her tone, "have you had those cerise flowers imitated, Paula? You might wear them; I am sure Edgar will admire them."

A sudden cloud passed over Paula's face. She looked troubled, and cast her eyes on the ground. "I have lost it!" she answered.

"Lost what?" asked Edgar.

"A flower she had given her at the royal serre, a beautiful Brazilian one. We were going to have it copied by my aunt's fleuriste for this ball? where could you have lost it, dear? for you have not been out of the house with it. What day was it? Why, Monday, and you had it when we were sitting with the abbé, looking over the folio."

"Never mind it," exclaimed Paula, in an irritable tone, most unlike her usual one; "I shall wear no flowers; it is bad taste, I

think."

"You are an odd child," answered her sister; "I only spoke to you, I thought they became your black hair, and would have

pleased Edgar."

"There, Henny," she replied, taking her hand with a forced smile; "don't be angry with me. I am very cross, I know; we are irritable sometimes without cause." She looked up, but did not glance even at Edgar.

not glance even at Edgar.

"Naughty child!" he said, laughing; "spoilt, naughty child!" and he tried to take her hand. Actuated, as it would seem, by a sudden impulse, she hastily withdrew it, and then as quickly placed

it in his.

"Forgive me, both!" she cried, supplicatingly, "I am not

worthy of your indulgence."

She then hastily changed the subject, and all three conversed for some time together, as in old, happy days, in outward seeming; but a change had come over the three hearts since then.

Madame de Rouvray had remained all day in strict retirement in her room, on the plea of want of rest, not even seeing her

children.

"Leave her to-day to me," exclaimed Manette; "it will be best. She is calm, and a few hours' repose, and a questioning of her own heart may do much."

"Monsieur de Brissac has not been to-day, has he?" asked

Henriette.

"No, but that vile, wicked Amélie (I know she brought him there yesterday, to madame's room) has been trying all day to get me away on some pretext; but I am too wary, this time.

"Watch, pray watch!" cried Henriette.

"Oh trust me, not another chance will she get with me." So saying, she returned to madame's apartment, and Henriette to hers.

She had been there but a few moments, when Amélie tapped

at the door.

"Mademoiselle," she said, on entering, "Monsieur le général is au salon, and begs permission to say a few words to you, alone."

"Alone?" she exclaimed, a chill coming over her, as it ever did when he was named. Not wishing the soubrette to witness her emotion, she added, "Where is Mademoiselle Paula?"

"In the large salon," answered the other, meekly.

"Request Bastien to show Monsieur le général into the inner one; I will come down."

Amélie withdrew, and, summoning all her courage for the inter-

view. Henriette descended.

On entering the room, he was standing near the fire. Bowing low, he placed a chair for her, at the same time inquiring after her

"It is well, quite well, I thank you, Monsieur le général," she

replied, coldly.

No distance of manner could affect him—he came prepared for such contingencies.

"Mademoiselle," he said, "I have sought you, feeling as I do, that there must be an unpleasant impression in your mind against me."

"We expect, monsieur, what we feel we deserve," she replied. "Of course; but though I know, from your marked dislike towards me, that I can hardly remove your unfavourable impression of me, I cannot bear to be held in such low estimation by you."

"I fear the task to remove my impression, monsieur, will prove

a very difficult, if not an impossible one."

He bit his lip at her imperturbable coolness. "You are wrong," he answered, forcing a smile: "I am resolved to do so, in justice to myself; there are few things I resolve to do that I cannot accomplish."

She did not reply, but fixed her eyes full on his face. He continued: "Your brother has chosen to act for himself, and contrary to my advice, and you blame me. I went to Frascati's the other evening, hearing he was there, to protect him from further folly

and loss. I was not playing with him-

She again raised her eyes to his: the indignant blood mantled in her cheek, and her lip curved in scorn as she said, in a slow and measured tone, "I went to my brother's room, to await his return, at eleven that evening; in the cinders lay a piece of paper. It was not from curiosity that I picked it up, but as a duty; for I saw a word which arrested my attention. That note was from you, inviting my brother to meet Monsieur Prévoyal at Frascati's.

A dark glare of wrath and momentary shame overspread his

face: he cursed Henri's want of caution.

"Pardon me," he replied, after a pause, "but such a letter was not written by me. Some one has dared to make use of my name!" "I can then only admire their most excellent imitation of Monsieur le général's writing," and she smiled in scorn.

"You hate me much, Mademoiselle de Rouvray, and hating, wish to think and pronounce me guilty of faults of which I am

incapable."

"Pardon me," once more she answered; "I do not hate you; hatred and love are master passions, which we confer on some object calculated to inspire them. No, Monsieur le général, I do not hate—I despise you! for your meanness, untruth, and deceit! Excuse me. I will retire." She rose.

"No." he cried, his passion almost mastering him, "not till you

have heard me!"

"How so, monsieur? Will you presume-

"To entreat you to hear me," he interrupted, with more calm-"Pray be seated: we have not spoken yet of your brother's position; hitherto you have been pluming your scorn at my expense: let us change the subject.'

She reseated herself.

"In a word, then, mademoiselle," resumed the general, "your brother's position is this,—he owes Prévoyal three thousand five hundred louis: how will he pay them?"

"Were it not better that Monsieur Prévoyal should ask him that question himself?"

"You will not check me. I esteem your brother, little as you believe it, for your sake; and for your sake I would, if possible, arrange this matter. Prévoyal has given him four days; if within that period that sum be not paid, de Rouvray will be posted everywhere as a defaulter. He will be unable to appear anywhere, for a brand will be on his name; the Church, for which he has been reading, will be closed against him; the Bar likewise. He will be a dishonoured man!"

She sat thoughtfully looking on the ground. "I see," he continued, "that you are thinking."

"Before four days," she replied, "his father will, I trust, have paid the debt."

"Ha, ha!" he laughed. "Do you think so? No: you have written, possibly; but you feel in your heart he will not come forward to save a son of Monsieur Waldron!"

Henriette arose from her chair in agonized astonishment, and

stared wildly at him.
"Come, sit down," he said, smiling; and, taking her passive hand, he reseated her. "Your secret is safe; but I know, and you know, that the Baron de Rouvray will not embarrass himself for him, at your instance."

"I should be glad to know," she said, recovering herself. "in what way our family affairs so much interest Général de la Valerie."

"In this way, mademoiselle. You see I am not yet angry; I came as a friend to consult with you, for I really feel a deep interest in your brother. I am his friend, if I am not permitted to style myself yours. I repeat, I came to consult with you on the best manner of arranging this affair. From me, your brother has refused a loan to redeem himself."

"Have you offered it?" she asked, in surprise.

"I have: if you disbelieve me, ask him.

"I believe you," she replied, "and I thank you; but from no acquaintance can he accept it, without feeling the obligation most painfully."

"So I thought," he replied, gently; "therefore I came once more to solicit you—for all our sakes, perhaps—to give me a title

to befriend de Rouvray."

"Général de la Valerie," she answered, "I look upon marriage as too sacred a rite to be lightly undertaken. I cannot ever love you; it would be a desecration of that ceremony to meet you at

the altar.

"Try and think otherwise of it; let me point out to you certain facts. I need but lightly allude to the painful position of your father and mother particularly, the consequences of which will, or may, fall on her children. She will seek refuge in a convent,—I tell you so; you will be left friendless—you, your brother, and Mademoiselle Paula, for your mother's act will still farther estrange your father from vou."

She held her head down and sighed. There was truth in this.

It had been the subject of her own secret thoughts.

"Now hear another thing, of which you are ignorant. The Abbé de Brissac, that man of so much self-vaunted strength, forgetting his yows to Heaven, is in love with your sister!"

"Merciful Heaven!" she cried; "do not utter a thing so mon-

strous!"

"Nay," and he smiled, "you have only heard half. She loves him too; she scarcely knows it, but she does love him. It was he who stole her miniature, that man of 'Restitution!' I have proof of it, and she guesses it. Now do you see the fate impending, and which may fall and crush you?"

She sat cold as marble, a thousand strange circumstances

shaping themselves into form before her vision.

"And I have sometimes thought," he said, eyeing her scruti-

nizingly, "that Monsieur Andriot would not have sued in vain to the elder sister." She could not grow paler, but the heart bounded. "This is a mere idea of sudden growth: there I may be wrong; the human heart is a strange mystery! But all your annoyance about your brother and others," he continued, "I will avert; only give me a right to do so; your sister at once removed, her half wandering affections will return to Edgar Andriot. Better the curé's nephew than be lured to notoriety by an apostate abbéfor such, for her sake, he may become. By withdrawing at once to healthier influences, your father and mother—all, may be saved. I will do this, if you will become my wife."

"I am sorely tried," said Henriette, in deep emotion, looking

towards heaven. "But no, I will put my trust above!"
"A good idea," he said, coldly. "But mortals must also help themselves. I have told you all; now I leave you time to consider. Your brother need never know from whence his deliverance came; let him think it proceeded from his father, who, however, will not assist him. I will say no more at present. Summon me, and I will fly to you on the instant. A revoir!" And bowing very low, he quitted the salon.

It was true: the general had offered his purse to Henri, but in a manner that rendered it impossible to his pride to accept it.

When that person took his leave, Henriette sat some moments in deep and agonizing thought. In that moment she abandoned every idea of self—all her anxiety was for Henri and Paula. Oh! that last dread was worse than death—she resolved to watch, but not to breathe a hint of her fears. If, for the sacrifice of herself, she could have been certain of saving all, she would cheerfully have made that offering on the altar of affection; but who could assure her that her self-devotion would have that effect? Everything around her was darkness, and to whom could she apply? Alas! in this last sorrow she stood quite alone.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, at length, "if my father do but write, as I think he will, I can then fearlessly throw myself at his feet, and revealing all, implore his help-he can save us." And with

this cheering hope, she rose and sought her room.

The day was cold and frosty, but invigorating enough to tempt any one forth. Edgar had gone out with Henri, at the latter's request, great as his disinclination was to leave Paula's side.

There was a large garden attached to the Hôtel de Cressy. As Paula descended the stairs which led to it. Bastien opened the door to admit a visitor. Paula started at the sudden presentation of her own thoughts—the Abbé de Brissac was before her. too, changed countenance.

"Mademoiselle is going out?" he said, after the usual salutations. "Only in the garden, Monsieur l'abbé," was the tremulous reply.

"May I be permitted to share your walk?" "Your doing so will afford me pleasure."

And silently they moved towards the garden. Paula was in extreme embarrassment: they had never been alone before, except during those few moments over the folio of drawings; and that day she remembered only too well. For some minutes they spoke but little. He made observations on the fineness of the day, and on its healthful influence on the mind; but these were mere words of custom, for as though to prove how little the influence of the day affected him, he sighed deeply.
"Is mademoiselle going to Madame de Verneuil's this evening?"

he asked, at length.

"Yes," she answered, "we are all going—that is, my sister and brother, my aunt of course, and-"she paused. Had she striven to pronounce Edgar's name to him at that moment, she felt it would have choked her. Her agitation was involuntary, and it was visible.

"And-P" he asked.

"No, not my mother," was the evasive reply.

"I did not anticipate she would."

And now there was another silence, and they walked on.

"Mademoiselle Paula," he said at length, and as he walked beside her, he fixed his deep, questioning eyes on her half-averted face, "do you remember meeting me at the Mairie at Tours? I have sometimes thought you do not. I much wish to know this."

The sudden question called a deep flush to cheek and brow: she turned hastily towards him, and their eyes met,—that question needed no reply in words. As she walked on, her heart turned sick at the thought of her duplicity to her loving sister in concealing this: she felt that he, too, must despise her: but man's inherent vanity, which is seldom absent from his heart, excused an act which flattered that feeling.
"Do you know," he continued, "why I was in that town, or

rather, whence I had come?" He spoke hurriedly.

"No. Monsieur l'abbé."

"I was on my return from Africa, from a long and congenial mission of salvation. I came, not in humble gratitude, I fear, for the benefits I had conferred on many, but in pride-pride of heart, pride of fame. I derived intense gratification from the tears of the crowds who had listened to me that morning, when I related many a scene of trial in far lands: and I who had saved so many, on that day was myself lost."

Paula was weeping the irrepressible tears of self-abasement:

her own heart condemned her utterly.

"Do not weep, unless for me!" he continued, and his voice trembled painfully; "you have no cause for tears; shed them for me, and pray-pray that this almost overwhelming trouble may be taken from me-this dreadful temptation, which is the punishment of my fault. It is vain longer to attempt concealment to myself—to ourselves; one error has been thus bitterly, but justly punished. Had you not concealed our first meeting, and had I not accepted my share of that fault, this would not have been awarded us; but the mutual secret engendered mutual sin; and now in the hands of fate I am powerless. Oh, pray for me! You are young and innocent."

Paula sobbed aloud and covered her face.

"I have much wished to speak to you," he added, "but never have hitherto been able to do so. It would be hypocrisy in me to ask why you weep. I am no hypocrite, but a suffering man—one who must fly or perish—bid me fly. Paula, I have read your heart, read mine, and oh! bid me fly, lest an impulse too powerful -a temptation too strong, should arise, and I become as ashes before the wind-swept at its will, a plaything of the blast. I totter—one suggestion from a cozening, tempting demon. and I fall!"

It was as if his words had called up that demon. A voice rang through the sharp frosty air, and from the other end of the garden, descending from the house, came Edgar.

"Paula," he cried, "where are you?" De Brissac stood still. His hands were clenched, his lips

colourless: his haggard eye met hers.
"Since when?" he said, between his teeth.

"He came this morning," and she bowed her head.

"Adieu, mademoiselle," he uttered, as Edgar joined them, and slightly bowing to him, he hastily quitted the garden.

"Paula, you have been crying!" said Edgar, looking earnestly at her. "Why? and why to him?"

"We were talking of my mother," she said, in a low tone,

looking down.

"Poor child, poor Paula!" he tenderly exclaimed.

How duplicicity leads the instant way to falsehood, and bespeaks a welcome for the guest; a welcome which, in its effects, leads to vice, misery, and destruction!

CHAPTER XXXVI.

When Amélie dressed Henriette for Madame de Verneuil's ball that evening, she anxiously watched every turn in that speaking countenance; but to her it was a blank. The toilette was completed at last, and Henriette hastened to her sister's room. Paula had been dressed some time, and was sitting thoughtfully in a chair before the fire.

"Paula," said her sister, putting her arm round her neck; "are you not happy, dearest? You look sad; what is the matter?"

"Nothing," she answered hastily, rising, and colouring.

"I do not feel very well: I think these flowers oppress me: they have too much perfume," and she took a bouquet from her bosom.

"That is a pretty assortment," said Henriette, "did Edgar give

"Yes," she answered, turning and seeking, or appearing to seek, something on her table; "but the odour affects my head—I shall not wear it."

"Oblige me, and do, Paula; it will grieve him your not doing

so. There; which flower do you dislike? Is it this?"

"Oh!" she answered, pettishly, "not one more than another:

my head aches; flowers will make it worse."

Henriette sighed. "Are you coming down?" she asked, and her hand almost unconsciously lingered on Edgar's discarded

bouquet, which lay on the table.
"Yes, presently," was the reply.
Her sister quitted the room. When she was gone, Paula took up the flowers, and looked at them fixedly a moment. "Is it you or the heart?" she said, in a low tone; poor flowers, poor weak heart-weak, perhaps sinful!"

"Oh, mademoiselle," cried Amélie, entering delighted, for there savoured something of intrigue in the mission which had brought her there; "here's a beautiful bouquet which has just been brought

for you! the man left it with the concierge, but with no name."
Paula took it; she thought of Edgar. "It is from Monsieur Paula took it; she thought of Edgar. "It is from Monsieur Andriot, I presume," she said, indifferently. As she spoke, her eye fell on the flowers, and she became white as her dress. It was an exquisite bouquet, and entwined with the other flowers was the cerise Brazilian one, fresh and beautiful, just gathered. and giving forth its soft and delicate odour, like a propitiatory incense. "What kind of person brought this?" she asked, almost with

a frightened look.

"A commissionaire, mademoiselle: he left it, and hurried away." "Thank you," she replied, and descended to the salon, the flowers in her hand. She had hurried from the room to escape Amélie's observation. Edgar's lay neglected on the table! How many a history is often attached to a bouquet of faded flowers!

La comtesse was in excellent spirits. There was pleasure in perspective, and despite the several feelings that agitated them, her nieces looked beautiful—a credit to her chaperonage. Paula avoided every question touching the bouquet, beyond the first amazed demand on Henriette's part, of-

"Where did you get those flowers, Paula? they must be from the royal serre? It must be Edgar; we spoke of them before him.

How good and kind."

Paula was silent.

The ball was brilliant. Edgar was there with Henri. Poor fellow! the happiness of that evening was gone for him, when looking at the bouquet his *ftancée* held, he exclaimed, with unconquerable emotion, in reply to a question from Henriette,-

"I never sent them! I gave her one to wear in her bosom; she formerly used to like one there, but, I see, her taste has changed."

The general was there, too. He made no allusion to the morning's conversation, but, saluting the ladies with his usual suavity, attached himself nearly the whole evening to la comtesse.

Madame de Verneuil was in ecstasy; she had gained a triumph over all the circle of her acquaintance; for, standing near her, in conversation, was the Abbé de Brissac! He who had refused, heretofore, every invitation in Paris, was in her salons! It is true, he stayed but a short time, but he had been there,—that was sufficient. As la comtesse and her party approached where he stood, to salute the lady of the house, his cheek could scarcely grow paler, for it was like marble already, but his eyes looked up and then

sought the ground. Henriette gazed in terror upon him.

Now, indeed, her eyes were opened, and, shuddering, she turned away—but not before she had fixed her glance on Paula's troubled countenance. It was not pleasure, not joy, that she read there, but self-abasement and suffering, as she returned his constrained bow.

Henriette was forced to dance: she could not avoid doing so. "Will you valtz with me. Paula?" whispered Edgar, offering

his arm. The abbé raised his head.

"I really cannot," she answered, trembling. "I am not well. I could not stand, I think," and she sank into a chair, convulsively grasping her bouquet.

"Pray do!" he said, imploringly; "I have much to say to you,

and cannot speak it here."

She attempted to rise, but her limbs refused to support her.

"You really must not dance," cried la comtesse, who was seated next to her; "you look pale and faint, child. Take my flacon: shall we return home?"

"No, I thank you," she replied; "do not notice me: I shall be

better presently.'

"Allow me, Monsieur Andriot," said Madame de Verneuil, "to

present a partner to you."

Edgar bowed. Of course, he could not refuse, and offering his

arm he led his companion to another salon.

"Has Mademoiselle Paula any commands for Tours?" inquired the abbé, addressing her in a low tone, as he took a seat beside her. "I am going to that neighbourhood to-morrow." "Leaving Paris?" exclaimed she, meeting his gaze.

"Yes, for some days—it may be more. I must visit Bordeaux

on business."

"Thank you," she replied, and her voice trembled. "I expect my father in Paris shortly; he is my sole object of interest there. Has not Monsieur Andriot an uncle? a curé there?" he asked, his eyes intently seeking hers, which were cast down.

"Yes," she faltered, "but it is unlikely you will see him, unless

you are already acquainted."

"No, I have not that pleasure. Had you intrusted to me any commands, I should gladly have sought him."

"I have none, Monsieur de Brissac, now."

"Now," and he threw a strong emphasis upon the word; then pausing, added, after a moment, "I see you have some more of your favourite flowers, but not in your hair. Your good taste has well directed you. They are beautiful children of nature and art; of art in the uses we put them to, of nature in themselves: it is thus we bring them into salons, and by so doing too frequently destroy their beauty. But these, I see, are not yet quite lost—they preserve their perfume."

Paula was silent: her eyes were fixed on the flowers.

"I had one of those sprigs," he continued, "the other day: it

still lives. Try and preserve yours—it would be a sin to let them fade."

"Yes, a sin," she attered, absently.

"A sin." he repeated, "to allow beautiful things to die for want of attention. When I return, will you show me these flowers which your care will have preserved?"

"I will if they do live," she replied.

"They will live. Good night, and farewell," he added, rising, "and in your thoughts to-morrow, remember him who goes forth on a pilgrimage of deep suffering, but of necessity—one, however, that will lead towards a tranquil conscience, I trust."

"Who speaks of conscience in a ball-room?" laughingly asked Madame de Verneuil. "Oh, it is you, Monsieur l'abbé-I thought

so. Pray tell me what conscience is?"
"Conscience, madame," he replied, "is a chameleon, changing its hue with the deeds of the mortal man. Happy are those whose

acts invest it with the whiteness of purity and peace."

'A homily! and here!" she laughed; then turning to her companion on the other side, continued a conversation she had interrupted when she addressed the abbé. When she sought to address him again, he was gone, and only Pauls, pale and agitated. sat beside her.

When Edgar returned, she made an extraordinary effort, and rising, accompanied him to the ball-room. She tried too, to be herself again, but it was beyond her power. In vain he endeavoured to persuade himself that she was ill—that that alone caused the change. He whispered this to his heart, but the heart rejected

the hollow flattery.

Paula took leave of Edgar, whose heart felt heavy; and, on their return home, avoiding anything like a private conversation with

her sister, hurried to her own room.

Henriette's greatest, indeed, her only satisfaction at the ball, had been the conduct of the general during the evening. Not once had he sought her; but bowing respectfully, rather appeared to

avoid conversation with her.

She entered her room, followed by Amélie, to whose assistance, in undressing, she was forced to submit. Seating herself before the dressing-table, she silently permitted the woman to unbraid her hair. In removing a handkerchief which was placed on the table; a letter fell from it. She turned it looked at its superscription, and read, "Mademoiselle de Rouvray."

"Where is this letter from?" she asked, turning towards Amélie. "Letter?" exclaimed the servant, in unfeigned amazement; "letter, mademoiselle? I have seen none."

"It was here on my table; from whom is it?" "I declare, mademoiselle, I know nothing of it."

The tone and look were too genuine to leave a doubt on her mistress's mind. She felt anxious to read it. The characters were totally unknown to her; but feeling that Amélie's inquisitive face was peeping over her shoulder, she abstained.

"Shall I move the bougie nearer for mademoiselle to read her

etter?" she asked, placing the light nearly in her eyes.

"Thank you," Henriette calmly answered, "I shall not read it

at present.

Amélie had to attend to Paula's hair, so she was forced to hasten away; and as she bade mademoiselle "good night," she heard her turn the key in the door and retire towards her dressing table.

Henriette seated herself; yet still she hesitated. At last she

tore open the letter—it was from the general.

He was far too old a soldier to trust any one further than necessity required. For more reasons than one, he did not wish Amélie to know that he was in correspondence with Henriette. When he had learned they had all left for the ball, he drove to the hotel; he could reach Henri's apartment au rez de chaussée without being seen by any one but the concièrge. Excusing himself on the plea of having forgotten something there, he entered, and quickly mounting the stair, proceeded towards the room he had previously ascertained to be Henriette's. (First, we should explain, he had given a rendezvous to Amélie at his house at that hour; he knew her punctuality, and having nothing to fear there, trusted to chance for the rest.) Chance favoured him. He gained Henriette's room, and in a handkerchief placed the letter, of too much importance to be trusted to the precarious post.

He effected his retreat, and gained his carriage unseen, except by the concierge, as he entered and left. Driving home, he held a few moments' conversation with Amélie, and then hastened to

Madame de Verneuil's.

We left Henriette with the letter in her hand. She broke the seal, and started on seeing the general's handwriting inside, and the signature. Thus it ran:—

"Pardon me once again, mademoiselle, for intruding upon you, but great hopes are not soon quelled, nor grave matters settled in an instant. I would once more speak of your brother, and pray believe me to be not all selfish in my desire to save him. Three days more remain before his dishonour—for in the first instance he won five hundred louis from Prévoyal, which were immediately paid—thus he cannot deny the debt on the score of unfair play; for by that, on his own showing, he was content to rise a winner. Your brother has since lost, and not repaid one sou! this will be his position, patent to the world. I leave you to judge how he will be judged. I have little more to say. From your father he will not receive a louis, nor from Madame la comtesse-from me, as I before told you, he can: I will arrange that; you see I feel and know you will apply to me. I wish to spare the delicacy of your woman's feelings in doing so-you need not say one word. Remit me the enclosed unsigned cheque, and in half an hour you will receive the acquittance of his debt; and your husband will make your happiness the study of every hour. Am I understood? three days remain, at the expiration of that "A vous, "DR LA VALERIE."

Enclosed was an unsigned cheque for three thousand five hundred louis.

The papers dropped to the ground; and covering her face with

her hands, she sat in deep and perplexed thought.

"Never," she exclaimed, at last; "I cannot be required to make such a sacrifice. His wife! Oh no, no-it would be sacrilege to

the memory that still dwells in my heart!"

She stooped, and, picking up the papers, was going to commit them to the flames; but, almost mechanically, she refolded and placed them in their envelope. Then she asked, "By whom was that letter brought here?" And, sighing, she wept in spirit over the web that was weaving around her.

The next day came, and one comfort—the general never called. He had said truly as to Henri's first winnings. Prévoyal, a creature of his, let Henri win at first, the better to get him into his power; for no sooner had he been paid that sum than Arsène. another of the general's instruments, obtained it from him, on pretence of an execution in her apartment. All had been gained over to pursue the young man to his ruin. How then could he

Edgar left that evening. Paula's miniature was not yet completed. As he pressed Henriette's hand at parting, she said, in reply to some expressed fears of his-some vague suspicions, "Trust me, Edgar, I will watch over my dear sister; I am sure she loves you!" And, unaccountable as Paula's conduct at times was, her sister would think so, nor suffer the other dreadful fear to occupy her mind. She resolved at once, too, to see her mother, though that mother shrank from her. Things had arrived at such a crisis that she felt something decided must be done. Suffering and alarm were written on every feature of that poor worn woman's countenance as her daughter approached her.

"Mother dearest," she said, "why do you avoid me? I am still your loving child, am I not?"

"Yes, yes, Henriette," she hurriedly answered; "but a living reproach to me. Now that you know all, you can understand my

sufferings."

"Yes, mother, understand and feel for you from my heart and soul. But oh! do not let the proud, the cold, and the uncharitable, who, setting up their own virtue, are perhaps weaker than you, drive you to a step that may be fatal to happiness."

She thought of the abbé as she said this.

"I shall never be happy or at peace again," replied her mother, shuddering. "When I think of the child I deserted, left possibly to his father's cruelty and neglect-for I never heard of him, Henriette-perhaps he is dead!" And the wretched woman bowed herself to the earth.

"Oh madame," said Manette, "think of those you have—those who love you so well! of poor mademoiselle, and the other two.

And then, Monsieur le baron—think-

"Do not name him," she cried, rising in agony. "I must never

see him again."

"Mother, mother, pray be calm!" entreated her child, weeping: "you will, you must see him; he will comfort you, and bring peace to your bosom."

"Never more—never more!" she ejaculated, in a hopeless tone. "The abbé told me there was but one chance of forgiveness of peace—to renounce all."

"Oh! madame," said her faithful servant, " le bon père Andriot would not have said that!"

"No." cried Henriette, indignantly, "I know he would not i and the one who condemns you has known temptation and succumbed to it, and your errors are light compared with his sin!"

"Monsieur l'abbé?" exclaimed her mother; "can you mean him?" "I mean Monsieur l'abbé; he is a hypocrite, and one who, in

his own boasted strength, condemns all."

"You grievously wrong him!" answered her mother. "If ever man were good and perfect, that man is the Abbé de Brissac!"

She relapsed into silence, and that child left her, finding her

presence rather a restraint than a pleasure to her.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE sole consolation Henri's devoted sister retained, was the knowledge of his affection. To his sanguine heart it was certain

that her father could not resist her earnest appeal.

With the morrow came a letter which filled her with despair. The baron wrote to her, accusing her, the pure and good, the truthful and devoted, of falsehood, duplicity, and of bringing ruin upon her brother. No feeling in relation to her family was spared. Even her mother's wretched state (and he did not know the worst) was supposed to be in some way her work.

The letter fell from her hand.

Henri came to her room. He, too, had received a letter. She looked into his face, and her heart almost burst. What was to be done? Once again she would try her aunt, for now there was no time to lose. Henri had but twenty-four hours wherein to discharge his debt. As he was leaving her room, she grasped his hand. "You do not forget your solemn oath?" she said, solemnly. "No, Henriette," he replied, "come what may, I again swear

to you, your brother will never be a suicide." "Now I can make another effort; I place entire faith in your

word."

The renewed application to her aunt was even more fruitless than the former one: the refusal was coupled with insult.

Her niece rose proudly, and with a cold obeisance quitted the

room.

"I think I spoke decidedly?" said la comtesse, appealing to Amélie, who crept out of a closet. "I would not lend myself to such a purpose for the world; though I think the girl has been imposed upon."

Oh, oui, madame, Monsieur Henri is very cunning."

"By the way," said la comtesse, suddenly, "have you discovered anything about that mysterious letter to mademoiselle?"

"Nothing, madame; I did as you desired me, I tried every way I could think of to open her pupitre, but it's a patent one, and I failed in my efforts."

"It must have been from Milord Vesey," replied la comtesse.

"I think so too," answered Amélie, "for mademoiselle caresses his little dog much more than ever, and with such an absent air. I cannot, however, discover anything about the person who brought it; there must be bribery somewhere: it is very shocking."

"Very, indeed," ejaculated the other, "but such things will be."

Henriette was pacing the salon alone, in deep abstraction, when lestion entered and handed her a letter. She mened it with

Bastien entered and handed her a letter. She opened it with trembling hands, for the communications of her correspondents had of late been most unwelcome and distressing. It was anonymous.

"If Mademoiselle de Rouvray," it said, "has the deep interest in her brother which the author, though almost a stranger to her, feels she possesses, she will put forth an effort, which she alone can make, to save him. Driven to desperation—his inability to meet his debts of honour—he has secured his place in the diligence on his road to Toulon, where he purposes embarking for Algiers, to serve as a volunteer. If she will seek Monsieur de Rouvray at once, at l'Hôtel des Messageries, she will verify the truth of this. In another hour it will be too late."

Henriette dropped into a chair, overcome by this last blow.

The hour had nearly expired, when the door of an apartment in the hôtel mentioned in the letter opened; and Henri started from a table where he was writing, on beholding Henriette and Paula. She had taken another with her whom he loved well.

The sisters could scarcely speak for their tears.

"It is true," he answered, to their appeal; "all is lost—to-morrow I shall be an outcast from society; I have in vain endeavoured by a bill—a promissory note—anything—to obtain time from Prévoyal. He will listen to nothing but the payment of the sum at once."

"Give me till to-morrow, Henri," asked his eldest sister, with earnest energy, though she was very pale; "Oh! in mercy's name, do not deny me; I have hope, much hope,"—she paused.

"How?" he cried, "you have tried all. For that, and for your unceasing, unwearied love, believe me I am more than ever brother was, your debtor. But how can it be?"

She looked down. "I cannot tell you now," she answered; "but I have reason to believe that my father will do something, although anonymously."

The words came slowly and with pain from her lips; it was the

first untruth they had ever uttered to him.

"Oh, my sister!" he exclaimed, clasping her to his bosom; "then we shall not part. There," he added, handing her a letter, "was a farewell conceived and written in bitterness of spirit; for to be compelled to leave you both, would indeed have been a sufficing expiation of all my many faults!"

She took the letter, but could not read it; her sight was dim.

Paula sat sobbing on a chair.

"Cheer up, little sister," said Henri, joyously, so buoyant were his spirits: "Cheer up; you must now learn to love a better brother than I have ever been to you both."

"And," whispered Henriette, "should my father do what we hope, you promise me, Henri, to strive and gain his affection by obedience and devotion to your studies, for our poor mother's sake?"

"I swear it solemnly!" he answered,—"by the sincerity of my

repentance!"

"Then come," she said, calmly, with a blanched cheek, and eyes sunken with suffering; "come, rest in peace, Henri; to-morrow you will be free!"

And they returned home.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Two hours after the foregoing events. General de la Valerie sat in his salon. His valet entered.

"A letter for Monsieur le général." he said.

He tore open the envelope, at his feet fell an unsigned cheque for three thousand five hundred louis!

"Hah!" he exclaimed, his countenance radiant with satisfaction:

"Enfin!"

"Order my carriage immediately after dinner," he said, as the servant entered.

When the man was gone, he rose, and going to his desk, which he unlocked, he took out a paper and examined it.

"Discharged!" he muttered to himself. "But she will not know how long it has been undated. Now, to remedy that;" and going to a table, he wrote the day of the month, the then present one.

Madame la comtesse and her nieces, with Henri, were seated in

the salon after dinner.

Henriette's fingers passed the worsted through the frame at which she sat, but the pattern was little thought of. It was as disordered as her own thoughts. She was weaving sorrow with every thread, when Bastien opened the door, and announced the general.

Henriette bowed her head lower over her work, and her lips

trembled.

He entered—calm and dignified as he ever was, merely bowing

round as usual.

A hope sprang to that poor girl's heart. "Perhaps he had not received her letter: perhaps through some unseen channel help might come, and she be rescued; perhaps --- " As her throbbing heart was framing these sanguine wishes, she felt, without seeing, that he drew near her. She durst not look up.

"Ever at work, Mademoiselle de Rouvray?" he said, with seeming indifference. "But it is pretty, and will reward your labour when it is completed: the reward of labour, like that of a generous action, is sweet. Pardon me, I have thrown down your

handkerchief from the frame: I am very awkward."

He stooped, and picking it up, offered it to her. Their eyes met as she received it. There was a letter within it.

"I thank you," she murmured.

Madame la comtesse, like a prudent chaperon (having been counselled by Amélie "to give ce cher Monsieur le général a chance of making himself agreeable to mademoiselle)," rose, and seating herself by Paula, who had placed herself at the piano, engaged her attention.

'Henriette," whispered the general—it was the first time his lips had ever breathed her name to her—she shrank from it. "Henriette, I thank you; do not accept it as a sacrifice, for a life

of devotion on my part shall be your reward."

She thought how short that life might be at his age, in which he promised her so much: and how long hers would be, however brief his days, with his chains around her.

"All that true affection can offer, I lay at your feet; every

thought shall be for you, and those you love." "I thank you for that promise," she returned.

"Now." he continued: "how will you arrange this?"

"I do not know."
"I will tell you. Your brother must not know whence his relief has come-he would not accept it."

"I know he would not," she answered, promptly.

"Can you not imitate your father's writing?" he asked.

"I never tried; I do not think I could."

"Can you not give me a line—just a line, of Monsieur le baron's writing P"

She drew from her pocket his letter of that morning, and tearing off the signature, gave it with the letter, in her handkerchief, which contained the promised sum.

"This will do," he said. "Is there anything more you would

say to me?" He spoke in a gentle tone.

"Only this," she whispered. "For a while—a few days—lest he suspect—or they—or—in short—"
"You desire," he said, relieving her embarrassment, "that our

engagement should be a secret?"

"I do:" and she raised her eyes, filled with her tears wrung

from the heart, to his face.

"You shall be obeyed in all things. Now I will leave you. Thank you—and good night." He pressed her hand: she could not speak; the big tears heavily dropped their leaden weight of despair on her silken flower.

Are you leaving us, general?" asked la comtesse, as he rose. "No, not until Mademoiselle Paula obliges us with that song again. I have been whispering to her sister, lest our louder tones should mar such harmony." And he walked to the piano.

"I will try and not hate him," thought Henriette, "it will be

my duty."

The next day her brother was free. Frantic with joy, he rushed to his sisters, who (one of them sincerely so) expressed the greatest

surprise. Henriette disguised her deception as well as she possibly could.

"Yes." said Paula, looking at the address on the letter, "it is in papa's writing, slightly disguised; but it is his. Oh, ce bon père." "And you will not forget this, because of any seeming coldness or sternness on his part?" said Henriette.

"No, never" he replied with energy.

"He would not seem to encourage you, Henri, but he has rescued you, and though he may seem to deny it by his conduct. do not you attempt to divine his motives, and strive to gratify and obey him."

"I swear it to you, dearest sister. But tell me now; how did

you know he was going to do this?"

"Do not ask me, Henri," she said; "let it suffice that it is done." The general came every day, and when, soon afterwards, he proposed again for Henriette to her aunt, and stated his hope of being accepted by Mademoiselle de Rouvray, it excited no suspicion in the mind of either the brother or sister. She had, in frequent conversations with them during that period, spoken of the general as a man who might not be so harsh and worldly as she had at one time deemed him to be.

"I beseech you to pause!" cried Henri, taking both her hands in his, with much emotion, "you know but little of this man" (he knew too much to make him desire such an alliance for his beloved sister). "Think of his age, Henriette. Oh, it would be

worse than martyrdom!"

"Dearest sister," sobbed Paula, "you cannot intend it! What you? only nineteen, and so beautiful! Marry him! It cannot be!" "Is there no motive we do not know?" asked Henri, a vague

suspicion in his mind of-what, he knew not.

"I will tell you," she answered, evasively. "You, Paula, think me too young: alas! the troubles of my mother have made me thoughtful beyond my years. The general will be a protector; my father does not greatly love me: I cannot return to des Ormes, as I am, with any hope of happiness."

"But you will meet some one to love, dearest sister," cried

Paula.

"No," she replied, calmly; "I am resolved to marry de la Valerie. I have pledged my word."

"I would sooner see you in your grave," said her brother, gloomily; "you can never be happy with him."

"Let me try," she said, faintly smiling; "for nothing can change my resolve."

The comtesse was lost in amazement. She knew not of Henri's debt of honour, believing that story to be-as Amélie had assured her it was—an invention.

Manette was speechless at first with astonishment and horror. She knew how Henriette hated this man; she felt it was some sacrifice; she suspected all, but even to her entreaties her child was silent.

The effect of the intelligence of Henriette's marriage, hastened a previously-formed project in the mind of Madame de Rouvray. So

mortal, or more than mortal, was her dread of seeing the accomplishment of this marriage, that she watched the opportunity and fled, whither the finger of the still absent Abbé de Brissac had pointed—to a convent. It would be vain attempting to describe the effect of this much dreaded event on the minds of her children, especially of Henriette. She saw at once all the consequences of this rash act. It would separate her parents, and by so doing, break her father's heart.

From la comtesse she received no consolation. "She thought

it was an excellent thing, for in truth she was quite folle."

Her mother wrote a long letter to Henriette, and implored her, in all affection, not to seek her yet, till her mind became tranquil; and to this desire they were forced to submit themselves.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE general, immediately on his acceptance by Henriette, had written to solicit her hand from her father, and now awaited the reply in more nervous trepidation than any one might have expected from his calm exterior.

The three days following Madame de Rouvray's flight, passed

away in wretchedness to Henri and his sisters.

On the third day after the letter had been written to the Baron de Rouvray, announcing this unfortunate occurrence, he arrived. He had deemed it best to consult with his sister before seeing his wretched wife, to whom he wrote a long imploring letter, invoking her by her duty to her children, to return.

After an interview with la comtesse, he descended to the salon, where sat his son and daughters, who were in ignorance of his

arrival. Paula was in his arms in a moment.

"My child! my own child!" he said, pressing her to his bosom.

On the others he scarcely looked.

"Father," cried Henriette—the appeal was unanswered, and she shrank back to her seat.

Henri advanced frankly, and tendered his hand—it was rejected. "We must have some explanation," the baron coldly said.

The other proudly retreated towards the mantelpiece, on which he leaned: even his new-born feelings for his father, engendered by his supposed generosity, were not sufficiently strong to make him overlook this reception.

"Have either of you," he said at last, releasing Paula from his arms, and placing her in a chair, "Have either of you seen your

mother?" The words seemed to choke him.

"No, papa," answered Paula; "she would not see us; we have

tried in vain.'

"And to whom," he continued, fixing his look on his elder daughter, "am I to attribute the influence which has driven her to such a step?"

"To no influence of ours," answered Henri, with difficulty mas-

tering his indignation at the manner of this address. "We have watched over her—rather. I should say, my sisters have."

"And pray, by whom were the secret meetings with this abbé

"There have been no secret meetings with our knowledge." said Henriette.

"Indeed!" and by whom, pray, was she taken to Madame Lagrange's!"

"That was all my fault," quickly answered Paula: "I was sitting for my miniature."

"Did you ask your mother to go?" he asked in a softer tone.

"I did." replied Henriette, before Paula could speak. "I did papa, to cheer my mother's melancholy by a walk every day in the Luxembourg. Without some inducement she would not have stirred out."

"The Luxembourg," he coldly answered, "is not Madame

Lagrange's. Why was she taken there?"
"My aunt," said Paula, hastily, "would not let me go alone, and

there was no one so fitting as mamma."

"Always like yourself, Paula," he fondly replied, "screening the subtle and wicked doings of others beneath your own innocence. I know who took her there—it was you." And he scowled on Henriette.

"Henriette could have had no bad motive," answered her brother, with lips white from suppressed passion; at the same time placing an arm round her as she sat pale and trembling on her

chair.

"Could she not?" exclaimed her father, violently. "And by whom was her money and yours drawn out of my hands? Perhaps that was for some good purpose! I have too much reason to believe, from all I hear, that that money has been principally expended in this good cause, and given to this woman, Madame Lagrange!"

"Hold!" cried Henri, in a voice like thunder, and the boy stood erect, unfearing, and almost in defiance, before the man. Henriette sprang up and tried to arrest his words; he pushed her away gently.

but resolutely.

"Hold, sir!" he cried. "That money was obtained and given to me to save my honour and your name. I had gambled and lost fifteen hundred louis; this noble girl, unknown to me-for I had only asked for my own-drew hers and rescued me! Come. Henriette,"-and he tried to raise her from her seat-"let us go forth, even if we go beggars; let us go away from injustice, which takes the form of a father to oppress us!"

"Stop, brother," she whispered, anxiously, "you forget!"

"Then why was I not told this?" said the baron, a pang crossing his heart, as he felt he had been harsh and unjust.

"You would have blamed Henri so much," cried Paula, soothingly: "even I did not know this, till now.

There was a moment's silence.

"Perhaps," he asked, as though seeking an excuse to be again

towards the faults of others. Charitable he was called, for he gave of his abundance, and remembered not the widow's mite. Strong, self-confident, he walked as almost a God amongst an idolatrous crowd of worshippers. He dared all, for he deemed his house on a rock; but there came a day when storms arose, and Heaven sent its winds forth, to punish the proud, merciless one. His house crumbled in the dust, and that man fell-fell! Oh, in utter abasement, he fell by the passion he had least dreamed ofby unholy love for a woman."

Paula shrank back almost in horror from that fierce passion, but

he held her hands strongly in his.

"Let me conclude." he whispered, in deep emotion. not without a struggle, a severe one, that he shut himself away from all, but there was a spirit ever breathing her name around him. Go where he would there were evidences of her. One day the temptation was more than his unguarded, unsupported weakness could bear; he became for this thing perjured, and a thief;" and he laid before her her own miniature. She uttered a cry.

"Oh," he continued, unnoticing it, "then all was forgotten. With this ever before him, how could he forget? How banish the dream of sin? All else was as nought. Vows, position, hopes of Heaven, all alike ingulfed in that vision, which opened but one door to his view, and, with the conviction that his passion was shared in all its fatal intensity, he fled, and became an apostate to his faith and priestly vows. Paula," he cried, in a wild agonizing tone, dropping on his knees before her, "I am free-free from all but my worship of you; save me, or I am lost!"

She burst into a wild, hysteric cry, and withdrawing her hands

with a strong effort, covered her face and sobbed aloud.
"Mine!" he cried, encircling her in his arms, "mine, whatever the suffering I have suffered, whatever the agony I have endured,

or may have to endure, -mine!"

She could only sob on the bosom which pillowed her aching head.

"Do not let me deceive you," he continued. "For my sake you will have to bear much; there will be those to scoff and triumph over my weakness, over the fall of the infallible man: but do not forget that that weakness to others, and to myself, has been strength to you; that every vow I have broken has been a registered one of love for you: think when I have to face the scorn of many, that on your bosom alone can I find repose or reward. Will you?"

"Yes," she uttered, scarcely audibly, "I will."

"Oh," she cried, with wild energy, starting from his arms, "not yet, oh not yet let this be known to mortal. Henriette, my poor sister!—this would kill her, for she esteems him much.

It needed no name to indicate whom she meant.

"What would you have me do?" he asked, drawing her back

to her seat, and clasping her hands.
"Go," she said, "go; give me time to think and act, and let her sacrifice pass without this additional pang."

"You shall be obeyed. Secure in your love, what have I to care for? In the new discovered world within me I have no place for any thought but love of you, and, with that love, confidence. May the blessing of our mutual ties of affection be found to gnard us. Heaven bless you, my Paula—my own!"

He strained her to his breast. Another moment, and she was

alone.

Her painful anxiety and excitement were almost unobserved. even by her sister, in the preparations for her own sacrifice.

The Baron de Rouvray would not be present at the marriage. An ample excuse was made for his absence, which was attributed

to a slight attack of illness.

The morning before the wedding-day Henriette and Paula sat together by themselves, at the former's request. She had noticed within the last twenty-four hours so great a change in her sister. that she resolved to speak seriously to her before her marriage. which would separate them for a while.

The only comfort she had, was in the belief that the abbé was still absent. She had never hinted to Paula her grave suspicions:

now, she resolved to clear them up.

As she entered her sister's room, that sister met her with a look so wild, so terrified, that she began to imagine her reason affected.

"Paula, dearest Paula!" she exclaimed, embracing her, "tell me what is affecting you thus. You are changed in appearance. manner—in everything: what can have occurred?"

Paula slid from her arms like a guilty thing, into a chair.

"There is nothing, really nothing, Henriette. I shall be calmer soon. We have had much to try us lately.'

"Heaven knows we have! but you, my dear sister, should rejoice, secure as you are in the affection of Edgar.'

"Oh, do not speak of him, for pity's sake," she exclaimed, clasp-

ing her hands in prayer. 'Nay, but I must, I will, Paula; I have had such heavy

thoughts at my heart about you and Edgar."

"Oh, in mercy do not name him, I again beseech you!" cried Paula, convulsively; and opening her desk, which lay before her on the table, she took from it three or four unopened letters. "See," she continued, wildly, "I cannot read them, still less ever see him again!"

"Merciful Heaven!" ejaculated the other, with blanched lips; "then my worst fears are confirmed! Paula, my sister, my in-

nocent sister, you love-

"Stop!" she exclaimed, in a piercing tone, standing erect, like a spirit of terror, "stop, do not name him! do not utter a name which I read in your horror-stricken countenance; you cannot judge me as I do myself, nor condemn, as I execrate my own heart—weak, faithless, guilty thing! but by all the love you have borne me, bear it still in memory, though you may despise me now -and for its sake do not pollute your lips with my shame, by giving his name utterance!" She spoke wildly and hurriedly.
"My sister, my own sister," exclaimed the other, with streaming eyes, as she clasped the struggling girl in her arms. "Paula. you must be mad? 'tis guilt, 'tis sin, oh! too horrible to think of.
Think of his vows, his position, all; reflect, and your better feelings must conquer. Oh! do not lay this heavy grief on me with what I have to undergo to-morrow." In her agony, she forgot that Paula knew not her self-sacrifice. "You know not what my sufferings are; for their sake promise me to conquer, to wrestle with this dreadful passion; think of our young affections, our happy days of childhood, of Edgar, of your innocent love!"

"I have thought of all," answered Paula, in a tone of deep despair, "and all is in vain!"

"But Paula, speak to your soul, your conscience, those will aid

you: 'tis sacrilege-

"You know not all, Henriette," she said, more calmly, "but you will soon: I am not the guilty thing in soul you imagine me. Rest content: whatever my fate may be, it shall not be a guilty one; sorrowful it may prove, but no more. Now, sister, let us go to our mother together, and ask her blessing; we need that."

Henriette could obtain no more: and somewhat consoled by Paula's assurances, for she never once dreamt of the possible truth, she prepared to accompany her to their mother's room.

Stretching forth her hand, Paula took Edgar's letters with a look as if the very contact conveyed a pang to her heart. Henriette's eyes fell on them.

"Does Edgar already address vou as Mademoiselle de Rouvray?"

she asked.

"No," answered the other, turning hastily to the superscription of the letters, "always to Mademoiselle Paula; strange enough, here is one to Mademoiselle de Rouvray: it has been given me by mistake: it came a week since."

"Open it, Paula," asked her sister, with pale lips.

"No," answered she, tendering it with an averted look. yours. Henriette, take it to your room, and read it there, but whatever it contains never speak of it to me."

With an anxious heart Henriette led the way to their mother's

room, Edgar's letter in her hand.

Henriette entered her own room, and closing the door, took forth Edgar's letter—it was the first she had ever received from There was ever a superior grace with the first of all things, from the firstborn to the firstling of the flock, from first love to the first letter that told that love. Henriette sat down and opened hers. "Henriette," it began, "Henriette, once my sister in all but the ceremony which should have made us so! I am writing to you still as one, even though a strange and kindling thought arises in my heart to repudiate that title. Since the last sad events have occurred, proving to me how much a young heart may deceive itself, I have narrowly scanned mine lest I should again err. I feel now that Paula never loved me; I feel that I too was led away by an imaginary love; love her kindly I do ever shall; still I feel, I do most solemnly aver, more dread at the thought of losing your friendship, than the certainty that she is no longer mine; and now I have sat down to ask you and myself, in the same breath, 'have we not all, perhaps, mistaken our hearts?' I may not be enabled to convey to you my thoughts, but brought up as we all have been together, an ultimate separation never entered my imagination. When I have heard of ties for you, that would separate us, it has pained me; you, Paula, and myself were as one; now she has left us, and I can bear it, but I never could the thought of losing you. These doubts are too serious not to be deeply pondered upon, weighed in scales of virgin gold, with diamond weights, too pure and true to err. Many things cross my memory, and I dwell upon them: our early walks as children, and then that interview when you lay insensible before me. Henriette-have we all mistaken our hearts? tell me. do tell me, all your thoughts! I am sad, I feel so desolate: you have never written to me; I never hear of you, far, far away. Henri wrote a few hurried lines a month since—then came Paula's letter; from its tenour I felt she wished to break those bonds already severed in her heart before I left. To my prayers she was deaf, to my solicitations silent; and then when I wrote my last letter, a fortnight since, written calmly after mature deliberation, her silence has only left me a deep sense of how mad was our first dream, how wise has been the awakening. Pray write to me, Henriette; let me not feel how little I have ever reckoned in your heart, when numbering its ties of affection; read, ponder over my letter, and find a little place in your heart for Edgar."

The letter dropped from her hand: what could it mean? What had taken place between him and Paula? had he severed their ties, and without more effort, more sorrow than apparently he had evinced? had they mistaken their hearts? or rather, had he? her own she too well knew, only time could prove it. Time, and as she thought of that, the morrow rose before her mind's eye. And with the cold sweat of agony on her brow, she sprang from her chair, and stood with both hands buried in her clustering hair, as her twin brother Henri was wont to stand, in his agony. dream," she whispered, "mad dream! Time, there is none for me! I have sold myself, I am bartered for gold, and if it were not so? Edgar must love Paula, they will meet, they shall, and be happy yet; his letter means nothing—it is from a soul in pain. She told me she would prove her innocence; if she loved de Brissac, she could not do so. No, she may have been dazzled by that guilty man, but her pure heart will return to its first love when I am married." Here her heart stood still, the blood refused to flow on for a while over that rock on which her bark of Hope must be dashed to wreck. A deep sigh sped on the current. "When I am married, Paula will be with me, Edgar shall come, I will reunite them, and their happiness shall bring me peace." Here she stooped, and taking up his letter, read and re-read it, then rising slowly she approached the chimney, and held it over the flame. "No," she uttered, withdrawing it, "why should I destroy it, it is a brother's letter," she paused. "A brother's letter, is it? he disclaims that title, and to-morrow I shall be a wife! none must

ever see this letter, nor I again!" She looked round: all was still: she stooped her head, and the quivering lips touched the paper, the fingers relaxed, and the flame drew the sheet, sanctified by her pure kiss, to its embrace. She stood looking on sadlythe last word which met her eye was "Edgar," and all was ashes.

On this day Lord Vesey returned to Paris.

CHAPTER XLL

Ir there is one thing more painful to read on the young face than deep, overwhelming grief, it is that disciplined resignation which tells so much disenchantment, so many severed links of life, once bright and glittering, grown rusted and dim by the tears of the soul.

Such a face was Henriette's as she stepped into the splendid equipage at Madame de Cressy's door, to pass her honeymoon at one of the general's seats near Fontainebleau. She was tearless. pale, and calm—she had accepted the self-sacrifice, and asked no

sympathy.

"Mademoiselle Mélanie," said the butler to Henriette's maid, as he summoned her from the apartment of the marquise, shortly after the arrival of the general and his bride at Fontainebleau, "there is a gentleman below who says he must speak a word with you."

"With me?" she replied; "who can know me here?"

"I do not know; but as he says he has something important to communicate, I have shown him into the waiting-room.

"I will see him, then, but I must hasten, for madame is in her room, going to dress." So saying, she descended the stairs. She had never before seen Lord Vesey, and, on entering the room,

inquired in what way she could oblige him.

He was much agitated. Briefly he told the astonished soubrette that he had something of the utmost consequence to communicate alone to Madame la marquise. "Arrange it," he said, "at once; you need not announce me; say some person from her family; but let it be unknown to Monsieur de la Valerie;" and, as he spoke, he placed a purse in her hand.

"I scarcely know how, monsieur," she answered. Then, with that ready wit peculiar to French maids, she said, inquiringly,

"No one knows monsieur, I suppose?"

"Perhaps monsieur de la Valerie's valet may."

"He is just now with monsieur in his dressing-room; follow me up the back staircase; if we are met, I will say you are my cousin. Monsieur will pardon that liberty? I will take you to madame's salon, adjoining her room, and then tell her some one from her family wishes to speak with her."

They gained the apartment unseen. Henriette was seated

before the fire in her dressing-room, thinking of the one

where she had so often sat with Paula, at des Ormes, when Mélanie entered, and, in a low tone, announced a visitor from her family. This much alarmed her. Was it Henri, and had Mélanie feared to tell her so? Dreading some evil tidings, she flew to the salon, and, opening the door, found her hand warmly grasped by Lord Vesey.

"You here, my lord?" she cried, shrinking back.

"Do not start from me," he replied, again taking her hand, and drawing her towards a seat; "do not wrong my motive by a false suspicion; remember our last interview and interrupted conversation, let that dwell on your mind whilst listening to me now."

"Can I serve you?" she said, looking up in his face calmly;

his words had reassured her.

"No, not now, Henriette. I cannot call you by his name—forgive me if I seem abrupt, but, believe me, only one motive prompts the course I am taking—sincere friendship. I know all. I returned to Paris last night; and it was not until this very day, when your sacrifice was accomplished, that I had heard of it, and of the motives that induced you to take this ill-fated step, and have followed you hither. Oh! would that I had been in Paris, I could have saved your brother, and, better still, yourself; you

would have allowed me, would you not?"

She had struggled to seem calm during this speech: all her great sacrifice rose before her, a sacrifice which, had Vesey been there, might have never been accomplished. She felt she could have appealed to him. Looking up in his face, her own struggled a moment to seem calm; but the effort was vain; for the first time that day, her heart yielded up what it had refused to Henri's grief, and Paula's anguish, and she wept bitterly; her small white hands convulsively pressed down the lids to subdue the torrent; but the storm of despair could not be subdued, and the tears gushed through the small fingers over cheek and bosom.

"Do not weep thus," he faltered, and his own eyes were dimmed, as he laid his hand on her arm. "Do not weep, I come

to save you."

"Save me?" she cried, withdrawing her hands and gazing wildly in his face. "How? do you not know all—that I am

married?"

"Yes," he answered, "but I also know, that with us no marriage contracted under such circumstances can hold good; the laws would release you. Fly with me; I swear that to me you are as a dear sister; I will place you in three hours' time under your brother's care, he shall conduct you to England, there, if it be in the power of gold to do it, you shall be freed; by your mother's side you are English, and that will entitle you to the protection of our laws!"

"Alas! alas!" she uttered, again relapsing into tears, "your sanguine heart has led you into error; it cannot be, neither could I thus throw myself on the kindness of one who is not related to me. I scarcely know why I feel as I do towards you; I am indeed grateful, more so than words may express, but it cannot be."

n 2

"And would you, through false delicacy, sacrifice the happiness of a life? I am certain you might free yourself. Let me implore

you to make the effort," and he grasped both her hands.

For a moment hope bade the thought enter in her heart; then came another to force her from essaying to break her bonds. Edgar,—the thought of him, of her cherished love for him, made her resolve to bear all, sooner than expose her weakness to so severe a trial as his presence would be, herself, perhaps free, and he Paula's husband—for it never dwelt in her mind that they would ultimately separate. She knew not either, nor Paula's interview with de Brissac.

Long did he continue to urge, but she grew calm and determined—he saw there was some other thought brooding in her heart: he could but try to comfort, and offer his sympathy and support, which she promised, at her need, as freely to call upon as it was freely offered. Before they parted, she learnt the history he had been prevented from relating, owing to his hasty departure from Paris. He had seen in Italy, the year before his meeting with Henriette, an English family of old descent, who prided themselves more on an unblemished name through a long line of ancestors, than on the empty merit of a mere title, unadorned by virtues. An only daughter formed the comfort of her doting parents; and it was for her health's sake they had visited the south. Between them and Vesey sprang up a close intimacy, which, ere long, led to a warm attachment between this one loved child and himself, sanctioned by her parents and his father. complete all necessary arrangements, they had all travelled together to England some months since. An interview took place between the Earl of Courtoun and her father: the rest was a blank to Vesey; he found himself, for some reason, unrevealed by either her family or his father, forbidden the house, forbidden ever to think of that fair girl as his wife, who had been his constant companion for months. Her father wrote in all kindness to him, but the verdict was, "they must forget each other."

"Have you no clue to their motive?" she asked, endeavouring

to forget her own sorrow in his.

"None," he replied, "neither from her father nor my own."

"Let us hope time may remove many cares. For all you have offered me to-day, I indeed owe you sympathy and affection; neither shall ever be wanting; and now, pray leave me; believe that a motive, more than you can know, makes me resolved to seek forgetfulness in duty, even to the man who has won me by such base means."

Mélanie opened the door.

"Monsieur le Marquis," she said, "is asking for madame."

A shudder crept over her, visible to both. The woman withdrew. "Go," she cried, exerting every effort, "pray go; and believe this, I never shall forget this day, or the deep interest you have inspired me with;" and, pressing his hand warmly, she entered her apartment. Shortly after, he was cautiously conducted by Mélanie to the gate of the château.

CHAPTER XLII.

A FEW days after the marriage of Henriette, all Paris rang with the account of the Abbé de Brissac's apostacy to his priestly vows and religion. Of the many who had worshipped him, none remained to utter one kind word, one apology for the act. He had not alone deserted his faith above, but betrayed those who had trusted him on earth. There was a gloom over all, a general execration uttered or felt; and no one then knew the cause. In truth, he little merited sympathy or excuse: a man may at the eleventh hour see the error of his faith, and, in changing it for another, look boldly upwards for support, so it be conscientiously done; but here was one, an apostate to his opinions-all for the love of a woman. He who had almost irreligiously uttered his doctrines against marriage, was praying for the moment to arrive when he might call Paula his at the altar. He thought not of faith, nor questioned the merits of either church. He knelt, and, lying before Heaven, abjured in its face the religion he still held in his heart. He stood before the world, a naked leper, every plague-spot visible, degraded to that meanest thing, a liar!

Paula dared not think of her love, she shrank from it, and in a wild, feverish excitement, vainly sought relief from reflection in

any gaiety.

La comtesse had never dreamt of so strange a possibility; looking upon it in a worldly point of view, her delight was excessive. A triumph over all, for who might do what her niece had done? De Brissac, now a man of rank and all-sufficient fortune; the match broken off with Edgar; there lay her triumph over Monsieur Andriot. "She, a Protestant," she said, "could see no crime in the abbé's abjuring his religion," quite losing sight of his broken vows to Heaven, equally repulsive to every creed; and her mind was not sufficiently elevated to feel a disgust towards the weakness of the man.

It would be difficult to define Henri's feelings. Since his sister's marriage he had become totally changed. He was no longer the wild, unthinking boy. As a drunken man sobered, he looked around, remembering all, but above all, the love and anxiety of that dear sister. He felt that now it was time to prove his affection by obeying her wishes, and after writing to inform his father of his purposed amendment, as a tribute to the succour he still imagined he had been receiving from him, he commenced studying for the church with a clergyman in Paris. On him Paula's broken faith fell heavily. He implored, besought, prayed to her, pointing out all its enormity. She had but tears to give him—excuse, none.

But of all who felt the blow, no, not even excepting Henriette and Edgar, the Baron de Rouvray was the most distressed. A thousand passions rose in his mind and heart against this man, who having by his doctrines and stern commands, led his unfortunate wife to misery and seclusion, now had perverted the mind and feelings of his beloved, and, as he deemed, only child. With these

bitter thoughts in his heart, he came to Paris.

"Paula, my child," he cried, and that proud man shed tears like rain over her, "think what you are doing, it is not alone here, you are lost, but as surely as there is a heaven, such an act will be recorded against you there!"

"Father, father!" she cried, "have mercy on me—forgive me—I am weak; I would save myself, as I have struggled to do, but have not the force," and she shook, in proof of her words, with

bitter emotion.

"Come!" he said, raising her in his arms, "come, I will save you, and in my bosom your heart will grow calm, my child, once

more!"

He pressed her to his breast, and moved to the door. A step sounded without; it woke her, though almost lifeless; shricking she broke from his grasp.

The door opened, and de Brissac entered. Her father stood for a moment powerless, the muscles of his face worked with emo-

tion, but he could not utter a word. The other advanced—
"Back!" shouted the baron, at length, like a denouncing spirit.
"Back! touch not this pure child, she is mine! By your arts
you have dealt ruin around you, and yet you dare look calmly on."

"My arts," he replied meekly but loftily, "have been those of

conscience and right."

"Conscience," laughed the baron, convulsively, "conscience, he calls it, to drive a woman from her husband, leaving her children motherless. Conscience! to draw this weak, loving, but pure child to his apostate embrace. Double apostate! to opinions and priestly

vows; but she at least shall be saved."

He strode towards Paula; de Brissac raised his arms, and the infatuated girl sprang to him for shelter. It was as a death-blow to her poor father; his sight was quenched, his head dropped on his breast, and one by one the burning tears oozed forth, as he compressed his eyelids to clear his vision. Paula saw not this; her head was hidden on de Brissac's bosom.

"Monsieur de Rouvray," he said, with deep emotion, "it were vain now to argue the merits of this deed. I have cast thought aside; the act has been one of fate! I have loved Paula, ay, from the first hour when her eyes looked on me. I fled her, tried all that man, mortal man may, to forget her. I will not defend my apostasy, but better, worthier, that, than to live in sinful hopes,

now they may be sanctified."

"And do you think," uttered the baron, struggling to be calm, "do you think any power on earth or any law of man can sanctify a breach of every vow? No, do not think it. I mourn over my lost child. But it is past; she has chosen. I never will sanction it, and if she can marry you without that, her father's curse will rest upon her."

"Hush," whispered de Brissac, to the trembling, sobbing girl.
"Hush, Paula, there is no love so firmly rooted as that planted in

sorrow.'

"And," continued her father, emphatically, "if laws can do it, I

will tear her from you."

"To be a castaway," said de Brissac. "For I know by my own love what hers is in force and patience. Her head has not leant on this bosom without gaining strength from it. All mine she is, in soul and strength, sanctioned or condemned, by you or the whole world."

The baron strode towards him and seized Paula's arm. She dared not turn and look in his face; she felt a horror of herself.

and clung in agony to de Brissac.

"Tis done!" said her father, in broken tones; "she has chosen, 'tis now for me to act. For you," he cried, sternly, steadying his voice, "if any law of honour binds you, if in your worldly career you bow to the world's commands, this will bid you how to seek me," and with his hand he struck him across the cheek. A heavy groan burst from de Brissac. Holding Paula with one arm, with the other he grasped the baron's hand as in a vice.

"Man," he cried, in a tone of deeply concentrated passion, "you tax me too far; there is the vigour of thirty unused years in this frame; I could crush you as I would a fly, but you are her father. Look up, Paula, tell him what I suffered before my soul gave way;

tell him---

A dead weight was on his arm—she had fainted. Releasing the baron from his iron grasp he bore her to a couch, and unheeding her father's presence, knelt beside it, suing to offended Heaven for mercy. He thought her dead. Her father cast one look of inexpressible bitterness and sorrow on them, and left the room without uttering a word.

CHAPTER XLIII.

DE BRISSAC was paralyzed; for some moments he knelt motionless, the cold dew of agony on his forehead—he could not leave her to summon assistance. Slowly she revived: with her first perceptible breath, a cry of delight burst from his breast, and clasping her there, he ventured, almost dared to utter a prayer for her safety.

"Paula, my own," he whispered, "look upon me. We are alone! No, thank Heaven, you are not taken from me. I should have gone

mad!"

"Is my father gone?" she asked, wildly.

"Yes, we are alone, dearest, and safe and free."

"What was it he said?" she whispered.

"Oh, what avails that? We shall but love the more, severed

from all."

"And you, you!" she exclaimed more coherently, "I remember all now—he struck you in anger!" De Brissac crimsoned and then as quickly grew deadly pale; he was a brave man, and that blow had stricken his soul. "Do not speak of that, Paula," he whispered, scarcely articulately, "or the world may hear. Only

the immortal spirits know it now, and you, my own self. They will blot out many a sin for the rankling thorn in my soul planted there by that unavengeable blow; he is your father, and you, Paula, will love me the more, for the suffering I endure, in bearing the disgrace."

"Tell me," she said, after a pause, and placing both hands on his shoulders as he still knelt before her. "Do you never reflect on what you have done?" Do you not recret a good name lost?"

on what you have done? Do you not regret a good name lost?"

"No," he answered, rising, and sitting beside her, with both her hands in his, "I would make a thousand such sacrifices to be loved by you. I will tell you; the Abbé de Brissac, that cold, stern man, died, and his transmigrated soul came again into Melchior de Brissac, priest no more, to worship you! he left behind him his cold monastic vows."

"Hush," she said, "do not speak thus now, my father's voice is ringing in my ear in denunciation of our love. Oh! let me go to him, let me throw myself at his feet and crave his blessing and

pardon;" she rose and tried to move away.

"Stop," he cried, clasping her again, "stop, Paula, I feel they will endeavour to part us; reflect,"—and his voice trembled, "you have more than a man's heart in your keeping, you have his soul—that soul which has risked itself for you,—remember the trust. Now go; and when all may plead against me, turn to your heart and judge me there—'tis there I would be sheltered and approved of."

He led her to the door, and turned back, oppressed by the reproaches of that conscience which he was powerless to slience.

But Paula did not again see her father; the baron had in the mean time not been permitted an interview with his wife. No prayers could move her to meet him.

He sought la comtesse; from her, however, there was no comfort to be gained. She felt amazed at his want of interest in such

a marriage as that between Paula and de Brissac.

"Heaven help me," cried the broken-hearted man, "for I am powerless to direct myself. All are gone! all torn from me! My Marie lost for ever to me! And now Paula—all, all I loved! But I will forbear to work against him with earthly tools, knowing that a higher Power will punish such hypocrisy and evil. She has cast her father aside, even when I would have saved her—so let her rush to her destruction. My spirit is too broken to struggle more!"

Without another word, the lone, wretched man quitted the room, and, before another hour, had quitted Paris, on his journey to his

desolate home and living grave.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A LONG and dreary month had passed. Henriette was again in Paris, installed in the general's hôtel, and with her, her unhappy mother. We need not depict her sister's meeting with Paula, except to say that her efforts to correct her infatuation were utterly useless. Paula was sad, at times irritable, but one unchangeable feeling seemed to guide her towards de Brissac, an infatuation which appeared to partake more of terror than love. It was as the fascination of the snake towards its victim. Henriette never addressed him; if they casually met, she turned coldly aside, as from something noxious. This widened the breach between Paula and herself. As regards the general, on his return from Fontainebleau, he was a different, a happier man. But in his heart existed an innate love of giving pain to others. This feeling induced him to seek Lord Vesey's acquaintance, and invite him cordially to his hôtel, imagining him a rejected suitor of Henriette's, or rather one whose absence had enabled himself to secure her.

The meeting between Henriette and Lord Vesey was naturally a somewhat painful one. The general watched the effect with that gratification which only a mind like his could feel. All her self-possession was insufficient to prevent a blush overspreading her face. Vesey was even more confused, and in his embarrassment called her "Mademoiselle de Rouvray," which made the scene most painful to both. The general did not quite like her heightened colour. For an instant the question arose, "can she have loved him?" which he answered by a "quand même; but why have

refused him?"

Some weeks passed over. In vain Henriette wrote to her father; Henri wrote too; the letters remained unanswered. Paula's was returned, the seal unbroken.

Madame de Rouvray often sat in the morning in her daughter's quiet little salon with her, where not unfrequently Vesey dropped

in, sometimes alone, sometimes with the general.

One morning, two very different scenes were enacting in that

hôtel.

The general sat in a small library adjoining his dressing-room, where he received morning visits of friends, or business after breakfast. Amélie was announced—his brow darkened; he despised that woman.

"You wish to see me?" he said, hastily, as she entered, "be

brief, for I am occupied.'

"Oh! Monsieur le général," she replied, in a cringing tone, "I should not have presumed to wait upon you unsummoned, had I not been sent by ma maîtresse, la comtesse."

"Ah! you are living with la comtesse now?"

"Yes, Monsieur le marquis. Ah! quelle bonne maîtresse! Still I often regret," she sighed, "that I did not please Madame la marquise de la Valerie, for I am older, and more staid than Madame Mélanie, and la jeunesse is often thoughtless! A young wife is better served by a sedate maid."

"Madame la marquise," he said, coldly, "is, I believe, perfectly satisfied with her attendant. I never interfere in such matters."

"Voild," she cried, "how people do talk! I was told that Monsieur le général had insisted upon madame's dismissing me. I thought it could not be, for I always served monsieur so faithfully!"

"Well, well," he said impatiently; "what is your errand here?

Something more than this. I presume?"

"Pardon me. Monsieur le marquis, for forgetting it so long a time : Madame la comtesse wished me to call upon you, as one in whom she places confidence, to ask monsieur to exert his influence with Madame la marquise, not to desert and neglect her as she does."

"But," answered he, "Madame de la Valerie called there yes-

terday.

"Yes. Monsieur le général, true; but she came as a visitor; it was impossible to have any friendly conversation, accompanied as madame was.'

"Accompanied? By whom?"

"Oh!" she cried in seeming confusion; "perhaps I have been indiscreet! oh! ma foi! how sorry I am!

"By whom?" he almost thundered.

"Mi-lord-Ve-sey," she uttered.

"Oh, true! she told me he met her as she was walking there, followed by her valet-de-vied."

"Oh! monsieur knows that, then; I am most thankful; I'm sure,

I would rather hide a fault, than betray it."

He looked fixedly at her beneath his brows; the accentuated

"that" had lost nothing of the effect intended.

"Amélie," he said, after a pause, "you think you know some-

thing. You are wrong; what more have you to say?"

"Ek bien, Monsieur le général, Madame la comtesse wished me first of all to implore your kind interference touching Madame la marquise's short and cold visits, and next on her haughty dislike of all counsel and advice, which I am sure Madame la tante means well."

"I cannot really see," he impatiently answered, "wherein Madame de la Valerie needs advice, or deserves censure from

her aunt."

"Well, you see, monsieur, Madame la comtesse has passed through life with an irreproachable character, and cannot bear a slur to be cast on one of her nieces!"
"Gracious Heaven!" he cried, rising furiously, "who dares

cast a slur on Madame la marquise?"

"Madame la comtesse feels," Amélie continued, in her subdued tone, "that after what she has heard, Milord Vesey is here, and elsewhere, too much domesticated with madame."

"These things were better said by la comtesse herself," said the

general, pacing the room, angrily.

"I have told Monsieur le général that ma bonne maîtresse places every confidence in me, and these discussions agitating her delicate nerves, she wished me to speak. Monsieur knows how discreet I can be."

Their eyes met. A strange feeling crossed his mind. Had he, the practised deceiver, been himself deceived?"

"Servants will talk. I am sure I have most sincerely regretted from my heart"-(she heaved another sigh)-" that I did not

accompany Madame de la Valérie on her wedding tour to Fontainebleau. Mademoiselle Mélanie is very young.

The general grew pale as ashes, and fearfully calm, considering his previous emotion. Scating himself, he motioned Amélie to a

chair.

"Nearer," he said, between his hissing teeth, as she chose one respectfully aloof.

"Now." he said, "tell me what you mean. I know you; you are not a woman to hint without a cause, and without proofs.

"I scarcely know," she said, hesitatingly, "how to explain myself. I would save cette chère marquise, if only for monsieur's sake, And ---"

"Enough!" he cried, stamping. "Between us no deceit is requisite—tell me all you have heard, and I will pay you. Now

go on."

"Monsieur le marquis knows, I am aware, of the constant visits

of Lord Vesey here?

"Perfectly; I sanction them-I brought him, in fact."

"Yes, possibly, here. Monsieur also knows that Milord Vesey left Paris suddenly, before the marriage of Monsieur le général. without directly proposing for Mademoiselle de Rouvray ?"

"No, I was not aware of that." He started.

"Yes, monsieur, such was the case. He sent a bouquet and a note, bidding mademoiselle think of him in his absence, and a similar one with contained no more than mere expressions of gallantry. Certainly he loved mademoiselle, but he left without ever proposing."

"Proof of this," cried the general, in a husky voice.
"La voilà, monsieur," she said, laying before him Vesey's two notes, which she had found means to extract from Henriette's desk in the hurry of her marriage.

"Monsieur will there positively see that milord merely alludes to some gallantries-probably in allusion to a rose mademoiselle

was working."

"I remember that evening well," mused the general, in deep

thought. "but is this all?"

"Hélas! non, monsieur. I took care to sift all before speaking. and I have discovered that milord returned to Paris only the day before mademoiselle's marriage, and knew nothing of the marriage till it took place that morning; for his valet told me, when his friend told him who it was that had been married that morning, he thought his master would have fallen. So he watched his master's behaviour, and when his friend was gone, milord rushed out of the hôtel like a madman."

"But these are his feelings, not hers," said the general, catching

at a straw of hope.

"I will continue," resumed Amélie. "That night milord did not return till daybreak."

"Eh bien?" asked the general, fixing his burning eyes on hers. "Milord Vesey followed Monsieur le général's carriage to Fon-

tainebleau, and when Madame la marquise went to her apartment to dress for dinner, she was absent nearly two hours. Is it not true?"

"True," he answered, without closing his fixed, glazed eve. "for

I sent twice to request her presence au salon."

"At that hour Milord Vesey was with her, introduced by

Mélanie, whom he bribed, into a salon adjoining her room.

The general rose with a groan; it was like the roar of a wild beast in frenzy. There was a dead silence for some moments, broken only by his heavy tramp up and down that room. He tore the handkerchief he held into shreds, which he scattered around him. Seating himself at last before the affrighted Amélie.-for fiend as she was, this passion scared her-he said, "Proofs-I must have proofs.

"Go." she said, trembling, "to Fontainebleau, to 'la Maison Royale, and asked whether on that day an English gentleman did not leave a horse there four hours—ask all—ask Mélanie if you

will. She told me."

"Does Madame la comtesse know anything of this?" he inquired. "Non, monsieur, nothing; but she has heard from others about milord, as if by accident, constantly meeting Madame la marquise in her walks and visits.'

"Keep this from her then."

"Monsieur knows he can rely on my discretion."

"Do you know Mélanie?" he asked.

"Monsieur le général, I knew her long before she entered Madame la marquise's service; she is one of my bonnes amies, and she smiled. "And when I found I was to be discharged, I thought I might as well do a friend a service. I bade her seek the place, without, however, naming me, as mademoiselle was so prejudiced against me."

Then you are sure of her?" inquired the general.

"Certain, Monsieur le général; c'est une bonne fille."
"There, then," he cried, and his voice was calm and firm, flinging a purse in her lap, "let me not appear in this; but serve me as you did before. I must know all,-all, remember: you can always seek me here,-my valet knows you; he is discreet. Madame la marquise"—the name seemed to choke him—"must not know you come."

"I am sure it grieves me to the soul," she began, rising from

her chair.

"Enough," he scornfully answered, pointing towards the door.

"go; and let nothing now escape your vigilance."

She was gone, and her credulous victim was left alone with the hell of jealousy and suspicion flaming within his soul.

CHAPTER XLV.

In Henriette's quiet little salon, on this same morning, she sat with her mother, who was tranquilly knitting, whilst Lord Vesey read to them, out of a volume of Lamartine's poems. He was almost the only person whom Madame de Rouvray would meet: but there was something so kind and gentle in his manner, that it would have been impossible for the most timid person to have shrunk from him.

"I am sure you must be tired," said Henriette, looking up from some flowers she had been painting from nature, and which were in a glass which stood before her, "you are indeed an indefatigable and delightful reader, Lord Vesey."

"I hope I have not tired you both," he replied, closing his book. and placing it on the table, "but I delight in this little volume; it was given me by a dear college friend, which doubles the pleasure in perusing it. Now," he continued, drawing near the table where Henriette sat; "I shall come and talk, and criticise: the last is a great pleasure, when you are perfectly ignorant of an art."

"Do you neither sketch nor paint?"

"Neither; and yet I ought to do both, for in Germany most accomplishments are cultivated."

"Have you been brought up in Germany?" asked Henriette.

continuing her painting.

"Yes, since quite a boy."

Madame de Rouvray looked up wistfully in his face, as though she would fain have asked a question; then a shade of despondency crossed her countenance, and she looked down at the slender

fingers monotonously plying their knitting needles.

"Germany is my home," continued he; "I lost my mother at my birth, and have been an alien from England, almost from infancy. I think parents are wrong in sending their children away thus, for the supposed advantages of education; it loosens all the gentler ties of youth, with its memories, making parents mere automatons, who pay and provide for your wants,

"What would your system of education be?" asked Henriette.

smiling, "a very severe one?"

"No, quite the contrary; we learn, as children, more from love than fear. I would operate on a child's feelings; good, wholesome tuition, not too much at once; amusement, exercise, that above all. Nothing brightens the intellect more than fresh air; Boreas is the child's best friend. All this should be done under the teaching, and under the watchful eye of a patient, welltempered person. These rules apply to either sex."

"But there exists a prejudice in favour of German universities

for youths.'

"It is a mistake, generally speaking. Give children masters at home; why should we neglect our mother tongue for a foreign one? Many perfect German and French scholars cannot write three lines of good English, or even spell correctly. No, let them learn accomplishments at home, under foreign masters; above all, let them learn to love home and its associations, and after that, send them abroad to study practically what they have learnt theoretically. I speak of home," he continued, in a sad tone. "as I can imagine it; I never had one!"

Henriette looked up with a feeling of pity, there was such a sense of loneliness conveyed in his tone. A silence of some mo-

ments ensued.

"I have scarcely an English acquaintance," he continued, more gaily: "my formal friend is almost my only one; you remember the person who brought Gem over ?"

"Yes, I remember," she rejoined, bending over her flowers; "I wondered at your selecting for an intimate friend, one who in

manner seemed so little sympathetic with yourself."

"But an excellent, good creature. What a pretty group of flowers you are painting!" he added, changing his tone; "have you completed the white moss rose?"

"Yes, quite," and she held her sketch towards him.

"Then I want you to give me the original. Will you? I have a motive."

"May I ask it?"

"A boy's reason, though from a man. This is my birthday; no one has fêtê me yet. I covet that rose. Allow me," he said, stooping, and picking up Madame de Rouvray's large ball of knitting-cotton, which rolled to his feet. "Gem is no respecter of ladies' work; he has already appropriated to himself yours, as a plaything.

He lifted the ball from the ground, as he spoke, and placed it in Madame de Rouvray's hand, which was cold and trembling.
"Are you not well?" he asked, kindly.

Henriette turned anxiously towards her mother, who made an effort to subdue her emotion, and said, "Yes-oh yes."

She looked fixedly in Lord Vesey's face for a moment, and then. as if some indescribably intense emotion seized her, she said.—

"When you were in Germany, my lord, at school, did you

know a Mr. --- ?"

The name could not find utterance. Henriette was in terror: she knew of whom her mother would speak.

"Mr. ——?" he asked.

"No; never mind," she replied. "You did not know him, I am afraid; he would have been just your age, but he is dead, I am sure."

The words came slowly forth, and her head dropped despond-

ingly on her breast.

Henriette gave Vesey a look which pleaded for silence. He changed the subject by again turning to the table. "May I have the rose?" he asked.

She took it from the glass, and gave it him.

"What a terrible thing it is to be so soon forgotten!" he said,

laughing, not knowing he was again leading towards the forbidden subject. "Last year—this day last year—I came of age, and was obliged to leave my German home, most unwillingly, to return to my father, and a huge, uncomfortable castle in Westmoreland. which became his, with the title, by the very sudden demise of a distant relation. And there, without a smile of welcome to cheer me (for my father and I were almost strangers), and out of mere ceremony's sake. I had to superintend the eating of sundry fatted beeves, in honour of my majority."

Henriette heard a suppressed sob behind them: Vesev was turning towards her mother, when she gently laid a hand on his arm. She was understood, though he could not comprehend the scene.

"Ah!" he cried, hastily rising, "there is Monsieur le général

come to join us."

She had withdrawn her hand at the first exclamation, but not before her husband had seen it, for the noiseless door had admitted him as she placed it there. She removed it without embarrass-

ment. What had she to blush for?
"Good day, Vesey," said the general, advancing with a smile; "always occupied in the service of the ladies?" He placed a hand on Henriette's shoulder, as he spoke. "Ah, my little wife," and he looked in her face, "painting? I like to see a woman employed: it shows a pure mind, a conscience free! Is it not so?"

"My conscience has a very gentle voice," she replied, smiling;

"it has not scolded me much yet."

"Well, never may it!" he returned. "It is a bad companion sometimes, so folks tell us. Some still it a while-lull it with a soothing draught, like an infant; but the infant finds a tongue when it wakes, and bellows loudly."

"I should think Madame la marquise's would sleep for ever in

a pure, undreaming rest," said Vesey.

"I am delighted you think so," answered the general. young are the best judges of the young: we old fellows sometimes grow churlish. Look up, Henriette, my wife and child!" and placing a hand under her chin, he raised her face towards his gaze. Her look might have been an angel's.

"It is a sweet innocent countenance, is it not. Vesey?

deceit written there."

"I should doubt Heaven itself, if I could suspect such a look as that," he answered, with energy.

"Brava! brava!" cried the other, releasing Henriette, and

shaking him warmly by the hand.

There was something unusual—unnatural in the general's manner: Vesey felt it, and after a few commonplace remarks, he rose to depart.

"What, leaving us?" cried the general. "I fear I have driven

you away po

"No-no, not in the least. I have a pressing engagement."

"Oh, then, indeed! But pray let us see you soon.

"I shall not fail. A revoir, madame;" and he offered his han to Henriette, who freely gave hers.

"That is one of your English customs, I think so charming!" exclaimed her husband, with vivacity. "It carries with it so much friendship—such thrilling emotion, too, in a gentle pressure."

Vesey looked at him, doubting for an instant his exact meaning: the other's face was unclouded and smiling; he held out his hand.

"Let me, too, be remembered as a friend.

Vesey could not draw back; the clasp was warm and kindly.

"A revoir, mon ami," said the general.

The other turned towards Madame de Rouvray with the gentleness he ever evinced. She rose; her manner was agitated, but the eyes were tearless now.

"Good-by." she said: "you will return soon, will you not? I

have a question to ask you.

"Shall I answer it now?" he said.

"No, my lord," interrupted Henriette, advancing: "not to-day, if you please. Maman is not very well; much conversation agitates her."

"No, not to-day," echoed the general. "Mon ami! it will be

a motive to bring you again soon.

"Are you going out to-day," asked her husband, as the visitor departed; "or are you too much occupied with your painting? That rose is beautifully executed. I saw Vesey had the original in his boutonnière. Did he bring it, or you give it?

"I gave it," she answered. "I had copied it; it was useless

to me.

"Are all flowers useless, except for copying? I thought ladies esteemed them as agreeable accessories to the ornament of a salon?"

"No one is fonder of flowers than I am. Lord Vesey asked me for that rose, and I did not conceive that I was doing wrong in

giving it to him.'

"Neither were you, ma chère Henriette," he hastily said. "He is a man I esteem highly, and I wish you to do the same. I merely thought you were depriving yourself of a beautiful specimen. But you have not answered the question, as to whether you are going out to-day?"

"Oh yes; I am going to see my aunt and Paula."

"Alone!—that is, do you walk there?"

She looked up, astonished at his questioning.

"Alone?-Yes. But I shall drive there; for I want Paula to accompany me in a walk afterwards."

"To the Tuileries?"

"Most probably, unless you wish me to go anywhere with you." "Oh no! go there by all means; you are sure to meet acquaint-

ances. "I wish to do so, for Paula's sake: she is more gloomy than I

like to see her."

"The effect of committing a bad action! What a great blessing it is for you to be so placed and cheerful!"

"I am not very cheerful," she said, looking up with a quiet smile. "But I have nothing to reproach myself with: why should I be sad?"

He did not answer; but casting one scowling look upon her. turned his eves away, and walked towards the fire. Gem lay on a chair, his usual place of repose. The general took the little favourite by the neck, and flung it, with a loud oath, across the floor. The poor dog limped, howling, to Henriette's side.

"Poor little Gem!" she said, caressing it, and looking reproachfully towards her husband: "in what has it offended you?"

"I detest dogs," he answered, frowning-"that one in par-

ticular; he is always in my way."

She made no reply; there was a silence, broken at last by his ringing the bell with violence. When the servant came, he said.— Give orders for my carriage and posters to-morrow. I am

going to Fontainebleau at eleven.

The man bowed and withdrew. Henriette laid down her pencils. "This is a sudden resolution," she said. "Do you remain any length of time?"

'If you particularly wish it," he sneered.

"I particularly wish it! Your manner compels me to say, it is a matter of indifference to me."

"Indeed! Some ladies rejoice in having their liberty."

"I do not require more than I possess; I should not know any use for it.'

"Indeed!"

There was another silence. At length he took up the book Lord Vesey had left. Some of the passages were underlined, a foolish practice, and best avoided, since it may sometimes lead to misinterpretations. The first one which met his eye was,-

" Vous l'ange d'autrefois, maintenant pauvre femme."

"May I ask," he said, no longer able to control his rage, "to whom this underlined passage is applied?"

"I really don't know," she answered, trembling at his tone.

"The book is not mine.

"Not yours? Then what is the meaning of this significant method of pointing to a passage?"

"I again repeat," she replied, her dignity coming to her aid, "that I know nothing of it; though now you seem to attach so much consequence to it, and in such a tone, I may be permitted to feel its truth!"

She rose, as she spoke, and placed her pencils in the paint-box. "By Heaven!" he exclaimed, "your cool impertinence drives me beyond myself! The allusion is evident."

"You are forgetting, Monsieur le général," she said, calmly, "what is due to yourself, and still more, what is due to me."

Madame de Rouvray sat in mute affright. She had never witnessed a similar scene, and she was pale and speechless with fear. "Am I so forgetful?" he cried, in allusion to her last words.

"Then thus I will remove all offence."

He flung the book across the table into the chimney. Urged by an unaccountable impulse her mother seized it before the fire had caught it. Opening the volume, at the first page her eye fell on a. name and date. The book fell from her hand, and she shrank

back speechless, as though paralyzed.

Henriette flew to her side. The general, who had not noticed her previous agitation, thought the present the effect of alarm at his violence, and rang the bell passionately, without, however, one feeling of compunction. In his calmer moments he really liked Madame de Rouvray; something like pity existed in his bosom for her. Then, too, Henriette loved her, and till that ill-starred day, that alone would have made him do so. Her child had seen all, and as she supported the fainting woman, awaiting the arrival of Manette, her eye fell on the page open at her feet.

inscription was simply this:—
"Howard. Bonn, 18——."

"Yes, Lord Vesey was at college there," she mentally said, "and he mentioned that this book had been given him by a dear friend. I will ask him. Can Howard be-

Manette entered before the thought had been matured.

CHAPTER XLVI.

"Tell Madame de la Valerie's maid to inform her mistress that la Comtesse de Cressy is here," said the general to the servant who

obeyed his summons in the salon, some time after the last scene.
"My dear general," urged la comtesse, "I really should put a stop, were I you, to all this absurd encouragement of the fancies of that pawere folle. I should insist on Henriette's leaving her to her attendant: it is not at all becoming in la Marquise de la Valerie to be the slave she is to that woman! never giving soirées except when absolutely obliged—never being seen anywhere, scarcely. I assure you, people are talking, and will talk, and things which would pass unnoticed in a crowd, are commented upon: this most singular seclusion is the topic of conversation.

May I know to what you allude, Madame la comtesse?"

"Why, her being constantly attended by Milord Vesey; you forget, general, you have a young wife. You should not leave her too much exposed to the censures of an envious world."

"Lord Vesey," observed the general, with apparent calmness, "is a particular friend of mine. Knowing Madame la marquise gave me the preference in marriage, what have I to fear?"

"Oh, Heaven forbid!" cried the silly, but not wickedly intentioned woman, "that I should say a word against the virtue of my niece! she is my niece—that is sufficient." And she drew herself up the whole height of the De Cressy genealogical tree.

Henriette entered at this moment from her mother's room—she

was very pale.

"I never saw any one so altered as you are!" was her aunt's salutation. "You have grown ten years older in appearance! this comes of so much staying at home. I have been telling the general 80."

"Allow me, madame," answered Henriette, with calm dignity, "to be a mistress, not a slave, to a society I care little for. You know," she added, softening her tone, "that marriage gives ladies a certain amount of liberty; mine is shown in the preference of a quiet life."

"Perhaps too much so, for your reputation," replied her aunt.

significantly bowing her head.

"What do you mean, madame?" asked Henriette, colouring in-

"Ah! well! the world will talk; it will, perhaps, say your

seclude yourself from all for the sake of one."

"You forget, I cannot but think, Madame la comtesse, that I

am a wife?"

The general laughed, ironically; then translating his derision into words, said,—"Of course she does, ma petite femme. Yo do well to remind all of that fact—some might forget it!"

"If," she said, rising, "the jeu d'épigrammes is to recommence,

you will excuse me, but I shall retire."

"Let us change the subject," said the general, taking her hand, and reseating her. Then turning to la comtesse, he asked, "Why has not Mademoiselle Paula accompanied you? Is she not well?"

"Well!" she echoed, her thoughts directed into another channel.
"Oh, yes, quite well. There is one of my greatest troubles—that girl. Would you believe that not all my arguments or prayers will induce her father to give his consent, or to send the necessary papers for the marriage of herself and de Brissac?"

"I am delighted," exclaimed Henriette, with heartfelt satisfaction. "I only trust in heaven my beloved, but estranged sister,

will return to us all: and above all. to Edgar."

"You really are a most provoking person," answered her aunt, angrily; "one never receives any comfort from you. I think your father deserves any punishment which may fall upon him, for thus wilfully standing in his daughter's light, for the sake of an absurd prejudice."

"I am grieved if I offend you, madame; but I again repeat, that nothing would afford me more sincere happiness than to see

Paula's marriage with that man prevented."

She was about to reply, when Henri entered, whom his sister had not seen for some weeks, he having been to visit Edgar at Lyons. In a moment she was in his arms; and her face brightened. After warmly returning her caress, he turned to embrace his aunt; to the general he gave a hand. La comtesse coldly advanced hers, and drew back from the kindlier welcome.

"Have I offended you, ma tante?" he asked; "it is quite unin-

tentional, if I have.'

"I must request you will drop the bourgeois style of 'ma tante,'" she said, proudly: "I have told you before that I dislike it!"

"True, Madame la comtesse, I had forgotten your interdict in the oft-permitted breach of it. But I see times are changed. Where is Paula?" he inquired, turning towards Henriette.

"At home, that is, at Madame de Cressy's."

"And pray, is not that her home?" asked the irritated woman;

"for I pity from my soul, the poor, persecuted girl."
"Her home should be with her sister, or my father," said Henri, "away from the influence and the infatuation cast around her by that man!"

The general sat silent, delighted at these bickerings. By way of fomenting them, he alluded to a subject likely to do so, as he saw

the other began to flag.

"And are you still as ardent as ever in your studies for the church?" he asked.

"Quite, when in Paris," answered Henri, "but I have been

absent at Lyons some weeks."

"I am glad you have settled to something at last!" said la comtesse; "I always knew you were exactly suited for the church!" (she quite forgot all she had once said against it.) Her nephew looked at her, an uncontrollable fit of laughter seized him. Even his sister smiled.

"If," she said, rising angrily, "I am to be insulted in your

house. Madame la marquise. I shall at once quit it!"

"Indeed-" began her niece, deprecatingly.

"Sit down, tantine-tantine still, despite all your coldness;" cried Henri, reseating her. "There was a time your neveu was a privileged person: n'importe! though you are made to forget. I don't; and don't many a kind word and action; perhaps, some day, you may remember them again!"

She sat down, looking rather abashed; he turned to his sister. and motioning to her to follow him to the window, said, in a low

"Get Paula here, if you can, this evening: don't say I have returned."

"Perhaps you call that polite," snarled their inquisitive aunt.
"No, I don't," he laughed, "but I wanted to know whether Henriette had seen my love."

"Love!" echoed la comtesse, "are you going to commit some

folly?"

'Possibly; I do every day"— he spoke in badinage. His end was attained: she was diverted from the subject.

"Henri," asked his sister, "if you are going, would you take a

letter for me?"

"Surely you have servants enough, without making your brother

one," growled the general.

She made no reply, but sat quietly down to write,—the general walked without hesitation to the table and looked over the first lines. Seeing his approach, she hastily wrote on a slip of paper "silence." He had seen to whom she was writing, and turned away satisfied.

"Well," inquired la comtesse, "who is the correspondent?" This lady had become so debased by her confidential chatterings with Amélie, that she was losing all her self-dignity, and sinking

into a perfect scandal-monger.
"The dressmaker, I believe," answered the general.

Despite his previous unaccountable behaviour, Henriette thanked him by a look. In her note she begged Paula to come to her,

without naming Henri.

At last la comtesse departed, deploring her extreme wretchedness, the ingratitude of all the world, and her own relatives in particular, because her brother would not consent to the repulsive marriage of his child and the apostate priest.

Henriette heard frequently from the Curé Andriot. Her father, he said, was living in complete seclusion; he would not even see him, and never went beyond the gates of the château.

When her aunt left, Henriette escaped to her mother's room, avoiding any more of those, to her, incomprehensible scenes of dissension with her husband. She found her mother in a more painful state of misery and agitation than she had ever yet witnessed. Manette, in tears, was obliged to restrain her almost by force. When her child entered, she shrieked out, stretching her arms towards her,—

"You will not keep me in suspense—in ignorance, will you?

You will bring him to me: only he can tell me all.

"Of whom are you speaking, dearest mother?" she whispered,

kneeling before her, and taking her hands in hers.

"Of Lord Vesey," she returned, sobbing wildly. "He knows

Howard-my Howard!-my son, my son, Henriette!"

"Hush, dearest mother!" said Henriette, with pale lips; "hush, you shall see him! I will write to Lord Vesey; I will speak to him as to a brother, for I know he has a kind heart. I will ask him where Howard Waldron is. Be calm—pray be calm!" and she hushed her on her bosom like an infant.

"And shall I see him soon?" asked the pacified sufferer. "But

where? How?"

"Could Milord Vesey not come here?" suggested Manette.

This appeal caused Henriette great anxiety. She was much troubled. It was the curse of such a marriage as hers, that the general's manner forbade that entire confidence which should exist for real happiness between a married couple. Less to-day than ever durst she tell him all. Something—an unseen fear, arose within her, at the idea of inviting Lord Vesey to the more private apartments than the salons. Yet how refuse her mother? She pondered a moment; then prompted by the conscious purity of her intentions, she exclaimed,—

"Dearest mother! the general is going to Fontainebleau tomorrow, early. I will write to-night and ask Lord Vesey to come

here at twelve. Will that do?"

"Oh, would I could see him to-night!" she cried, clasping her hands; "there will be no rest or peace for me till I see him."

"It will be impossible to-night, without the general's knowing

all. You would not like that.

"No, no," she answered, faintly; "let no one know it. Then it must be to-morrow: but, oh, what a long, tedious day to wait!"

"Ma bonne fille, you will ask milord to come, wont you?" asked

Manette.

"Yes, I will write at once," she answered, with an effort; "but by whom shall I send the letter?"

"I will take it," volunteered Manette. "It is safer and better."
Henriette went to the table and wrote a few lines to Lord Vesey.

They ran thus :-

"Will you call to-morrow at twelve o'clock? I have something of the utmost importance to converse with you about. My husband will be absent; but as I have much to say, my mother's maid, an old confidential servant, shall conduct you to her private apartment, where we can speak undisturbed. I will satisfactorily explain the motive of this strange letter when we meet."

She deemed it safest to sign no name. A few days before she would have written differently; to-day, the general's manner, by alarming her, made her guilty of a gross error in writing so ambiguously. Manette carried the letter to Vesey's hotel.

"Milord has gone out," answered the concierge; "but the valet

de milord is in his apartment, au premier!"

She mounted the staircase and rang the bell.

"From whom is it?" asked the man, as he took the note in his

hand.

"Milord does not know the writer," answered the cautious Manette, yet blushing for her untruth.

"Will he soon be at home?"

"Yes, I expect him every moment, to dress."

The valet closed the door, another hand as hastily opened it

beside him, with,—

"Let me look, I know that voice. I thought so," continued Amélie (for it was she), after cautiously looking down the stairs, "Cette vielle Manette! ah, Madame la dévote! so you carry loveletters, do you?"

As she spoke, she took the note from the valet's hand.

"As I suspected," she cried, exultingly. "From Madame la marquise! I know her pattes de mouche writing. I must have that letter, Louis," she said, after a pause, "as soon as milord has read it. Stay: could we not read the contents now, and reseal it?"

"Oh, no!" he exclaimed in terror, "I would not break a seal for worlds. I must try and get it, but no touching it before milord has read it. I daresay I can manage it après."

"Be sure you do, this evening. Now adieu, and don't fail."

She was on the point of opening the door, when many footsteps were heard ascending the stairs; and immediately afterwards there was a loud pull at the bell. Amélie hurried into a large closet in the ante-chamber, and the valet opened the door, giving admission to two men bearing Lord Vesey between them, faint and pale.

In endeavouring to rescue a child from beneath a carriagewheel, he had himself been thrown down and injured; still, he

was not very seriously hurt, and was perfectly sensible.

Amélie waited to hear the result of the doctor's report, and then glided away.

CHAPTER XLVII.

Paula had not seen her sister for some days, and then only in the presence of others. Oh! how she would have rejoiced to throw her arms around that neck, and say,—

"Take me once again, my sister, and teach me the way to true

happiness, for I am wretched!"

Henriette's letter, for a wonder, reached her unknown to

Amélie, who was absent, as we have shown.

Hastily writing a few lines apprizing Madame la comtesse where she was gone, she dressed, and attended by a valet de pied, set out for Henriette's.

A few steps from la comtesse's, de Brissac met her.

"I was coming," he said, "to ask you to take a walk. I am fortunate in meeting you. Paula. I should have regretted much not finding you." He offered his arm. "Where are you going, dearest?"

"To Henriette's," she replied. "She wishes to see me; we

have not met for some days."

"Don't go this day, then; oblige me. I always dread your meetings with your sister; I know how much she dislikes me. And now, all seems so hopeless around us! Your father's obstinate refusal—Oh, Paula!" and his intense eyes fixed themselves wildly on her face, "swear to me nothing shall tempt you to forsake me!"

"Melchior," she replied, "why should you fear? There is more than an ordinary tie between us; there is one of——"she

stopped.

"Sin, you would say, Paula!" his voice was sad. "Well, if it be so, let our love absolve us. But promise me, dearest—come what will, happen what may—you never will forsake or detest me."

"What could make me do so?" she asked, surprised at his

earnest tone.

"I scarcely know; the world has many paths. In one of these you may meet a spectre—a vision of the past; it may affright you."

"I have borne too much," she replied, sadly, "in my father's curse—in the reality of that—to allow a mere shadow to turn me

aside."

He pressed her arm. They had entered the Luxembourg gardens, and were crossing them towards Henriette's; he looked behind him.

"Don't go to your sister's to-day! Oblige me—I do earnestly beg it of you! Send your servant to say you will call to-morrow;

he can return to us here."

"Oh, no!" she cried, shrinking; "I must see Henriette; and it is growing dusk. My aunt is so rigid in her notions of propriety, that she would never forgive my being out alone—even with you." "And do you fear me?"

"Oh, no!—why should I?" yet she trembled.

"Then send him to say you will come in an hour; it is so seldom we meet alone. I will silence the servant. But an hour, Paula—but one hour!" His voice trembled with more emotion than the occasion might naturally be supposed to call forth. She looked at him: he was paler even than usual.

"No," she answered, decisively, scarce knowing why his manner

should so alarm her; "I cannot: do not ask me.

"Then you do not, indeed, love me as I love you. I would risk a thousand times more than I have lost for you. Risk, did I say? Lose, Paula, lose—everything but your love. Oh, if you loved me, no cold obstinacy of a father, no influence of mere friends, would weigh with you! Flying with me, you would force them to consent! How can they judge of our love? What can the hearts, frozen beneath the ice of years, remember of their genial warmth of youth? Paula, be mine," and his voice sank to a low whisper. They were beneath the high though leafless trees, and a sky darker than twilight was above them. "Mine, dearest." He grasped her trembling hand in his, which could scarcely clasp it, such was his agitation. "Let us fly, Paula, at once: your father will then pardon us."

"Melchior," she exclaimed, stopping and fixing her dilated

eyes in terror on him, "tu me fais peur!

"Oh, do not fear me! it is the dread of losing you which makes me seem desperate. Do not pause to think: I have provided

means!"

She trembled so much that her limbs refused to support her. She saw he was endeavouring to urge her a different way to the one they had been going. A mist seemed to gather before her eyes; it was not irresolution or weakness, but terror. She saw him turn towards the servant, and indistinctly the name of "la marquise" fell on her ear. At that critical moment—for she was powerless—a hand clasped her other arm, and a well-known voice recalled her to consciousness. It was the voice of Manette, who was returning from Lord Vesey's.

"I thought it was you, ma fille," she said. "It is nearly dark, but I knew your figure. I have been running after you; you are taking the wrong turning—this is not the way to your sister's.

You are going there, are you not?"

De Brissac wiped the heavy dew from his brow and hair—the cold sweat of hopes destroyed. He groaned aloud.

Paula did not speak, but clung to Manette's arm.

"You are trembling, mon enfant; the evening is damp. Take your nurse's arm. Monsieur will excuse it, I know."

"I am cold," said Paula, shivering.

"Pauvre enfant, you are too lightly clad. Make haste, madame will be so glad to see you. Allez! it seems an age!"

And she continued to talk on, until they reached Henriette's.

"You will walk home with your servant, will you not?" de
Brissac whispered at the door. "Pray do; I beseech you, do!

And let me call for you, or meet you. Do not fear me again; I was mad! I am calm now! Will you?"

"I do not know," she replied, in agitation, "I do not think I shall return alone: my aunt-" she could say no more, her lips

were parched.

"True, your aunt will send her carriage; I may then come for you; I will call and say so at l'Hôtel de Cressy. Keep me in your mind, Paula, in all the conversations you may hear to-night! Forget all which might influence you against me, and remember only my love—my undying love!" He pressed her hand almost convulsively, and turned away.

The sisters were alone once more. Paula was unable to conquer her terror, which had left its traces on her countenance. In vain Henriette inquired the cause of her agitation: she could sooner have died, than have sought in her affrighted mind to embody her fear. Her sister would not tell her that Henri had returned. She had received a line from him, saving that in the evening he should come, and begging Henriette to be alone with Paula.

She had shown his note to the general, who readily consented to its request, feeling certain that his object was, to break off the marriage with de Brissac, a match which, being allied to the

family, was most distasteful to him.

When allusion was made by Manette to her having met her and de Brissac in the gardens, Paula turned very pale. Henriette gazed with astonishment at her almost convulsed countenance.

"Tell me, pray tell me all, darling," entreated the other, taking her hand fondly. Manette discreetly withdrew. Paula was silent some moments, then looking up in her sister's face, with all the

confidence of years gone by, she said,-

"Henriette, you will think me mad when you have heard what I am going to say—but you condemn more by your silence than harsh words could do, my love for Melchior de Brissac. But not all your censure, implied or expressed, can equal my detestation of myself. I love,—oh, I think I love that man; and yet I dare not when alone think of him—it frightens me to do so—now," and

she shuddered, "more than ever!"

"Paula dearest, my own Paula," exclaimed her sister, with swimming eyes, "if that is the case, you really cannot love him. "Love!" she cried enthusiastically, "love, true, sincere love, has but one foundation—esteem—it is a key which opens the whole soul and heart; our only fear is, lest a cloud passing over the light of day, should veil any corner of that soul from the gaze of him we love; and by the power of that spiritual affection which we feel, do we dive into his heart, to see ourselves as in a bright mirror reflected there. To fear him, we must dread ourselves; to shrink from him, there must be some hidden doubt in our own mind, bidding us suspect him! Paula, if you fear him so much, you do not love."

"Henriette, you have loved!" And she looked full in her eyes. "But whom?"

"A dream, my sister, which fled before daybreak, and never

saw the sun. Let us not talk of it. Come," she continued, hastily rising, wishing to terminate the conversation, and scarcely knowing how far she might not be interfering with Henri's plans, whatever they were, "let us go down to the salon. The general will be awaiting us, else, for dinner. I will not tire you further now!"

The general appeared in an amiable mood—at all events, he was desirous of seeming so. He received Paula most kindly, and avoided every word which could annoy her, never once asking about de Brissac. Henriette had almost forgotten her husband's strange conduct on the morning. It was only recalled to her mind partially when he mentioned his projected journey to Fontainebleau on the morrow.

They were at dessert. A servant entered and informed Hen-

riette that her presence was required in the salon.

"Oh, it is your mysterious visitor of this morning," said the general, favouring the innocent deception towards Paula. "Go; I am not jealous. Take your sister with you."

"Come, darling!" she cried, rising, "let us go."
Paula suspecting nothing, followed her. They traversed a large salon, and Henriette opened the door of the one in which we have seen her that morning. Henri stood there. His youngest sister bounded forward to meet him. As she did so, the door closed, and a heavy sigh smote on her ear. She turned at the sound. as did Henriette-Edgar Andriot stood beside the door. Paula shrieked, and sprang forward, clinging to her brother; Henriette's hands were clasped in the young soldier's, for he had seized them; but they might have been those of some dying comrade's on a battlefield, so cold were they; and truly, the struggle had been hard within her to make them thus. He had come so unexpectedly, that she had no time to restrain her rebel heart; and as she looked up tremblingly in his face, a scroll seemed before her eyes, on which were written the words of his letter. "Henriette, have we known our own hearts?"

"Look up, little sister; look up, Paula," said Henri; "and though all else may no longer be, do not refuse a friendly welcome to one I love. Come, Edgar; be a man and a soldier; here's a

little hand to greet you."

And he held Paula's trembling one towards him: and Edgar loosened Henriette's, and gently taking Paula's, bent down and kissed it. She could not look at him. In vain Henri drew her

face from his bosom, and turned it to meet his eye.

"One look, Paula," said Edgar, "one to show me you do not quite hate me. Look at me as on a playfellow of our younger days; forget the past miserable months. Do, Paula," his voice faltered as he besought her. She turned to Henri's breast, and her whole frame shook, as her tears welled forth."

Her brother tried to loosen her hold, and place her in Edgar's arms. "Come," he whispered to Henriette, who stood beside him, still gently trying to release her arms, "leave them together; her good and noble heart will then speak, and turn back from the dark

path and be happy once more.'

"No," Paula cried, in intense agony, flinging her arms convulsively by a sudden movement round her brother's neck, and gazing wildly in his face. "In mercy's name do not leave us together! I should die; I cannot look upon him! Oh, bid him go! bid him go!" bid him go!" she franticly exclaimed.

"Paula," said Edgar, in a voice which no longer trembled—"Paula. hear me. When I came here this evening, it was with no thought of seeing you; what is done has been kindly done by Henri; but he assured me that only Henriette would be here, or I should never have come to pain you. When last we met-now some months since—your too apparent coldness made me examine my own heart, for I wondered that, after the first pang, I felt it so little, and then I doubted if we had not mistaken our hearts. I wrote to ask you this—you were silent. I wrote releasing you from every tie—you were silent still; and in that silence I have read your concurrence. I suffered at first, for that short, mistaken dream has wrecked my every chance of happiness; that boy's dream has blighted a reality.

He sighed deeply, and dropped his thoughtful gaze on the ground. As he raised his eyes, they rested, as if involuntarily, on Henriette's averted face. She felt, but did not meet the look.

Paula's grasp relaxed from Henri's neck, and dropping on the ottoman, she hid her face in both hands, and casting herself on the

pillows with averted countenance, sobbed hysterically.

Henriette approached to soothe her. Starting up wildly, her eyes fixed themselves with an almost insane gaze on Edgar, and before any one could arrest her steps, with one spring she reached the door and fled.

Henriette followed, and found her in her dressing-room.

"Was it well, or kindly done?" she cried, as her sister entered. "Oh, Henriette, I would not so have pained you, Heaven help me!" and she paced the room, vainly endeavouring to arrange her dress, her hands trembled so much.

"Paula, hear me; I knew not Edgar was coming—but had I—

perhaps I should have consented to try and save-

"Save, save!" she almost shricked: "I am lost, lost past hope.

I see all now—all. But who may save me?"

"I will, Paula dearest; I will, only let me," and she clasped her in her arms. "Do not return to my aunt's; stay with me, stay with Henri, and your father—think of him; of our father, dear, of

that broken-hearted man."

"L" cried the other, wildly—"I see him, my father who cursed me? see Edgar? Henri? all? I who have polluted my soul by this mad love? this infatuation, this fatal dream?" She tore herself away from her sister and again paced the room. "I must be mad," she said more calmly, after some moments, "to speak thus -mad,-oh, it was ill done to try my poor weak heart so sorely," and seating herself, she sank for some minutes into a deep silence.

"Stay with me, Paula," pleaded Henriette, "just this night. promise you, you shall see no one but Manette, not even maman.

Stay, I beseech you, stay!"

"No," she said, rising, "I have chosen, and will abide by my choice; it is useless urging me. I am too weak to bear much—I shall become desperate; and then Heaven help me! While Melchior is all I believe him to be, whether it be sin, whether it bring sorrow and bitterness, I will abide by it."

"Oh," cried Henriette, "pause, Paula; withdraw your steps from this dreadful precipice—an apostate, even though he be one

for your sake! I entreat you pause!"

"Hush!" answered the sister; "I must hear no more; this but adds to my sin; hush, some one comes."

A rap came to the door: Mélanie opened it.

"Madame de Cressy," she said, "has sent her carriage for mademoiselle, and Amélie is also below to accompany her."

"Amélie?" she cried; "I would rather Manette; but no, 'tis

best_so—I am ready."

"Let Henri go with you," whispered her sister.

"No, Henriette; if you love me, let me go alone to-night. I am calm now. Do not urge me; we shall meet soon. Heaven bless you, my beloved sister!"

"Then this letter," said the general, who sat in his library while the above scene took place, conversing with Amélie, "is the only one which has passed between them, you are sure?"

He spoke with cold, pale lips—ever a bad sign in a man. He held

Henriette's to Vesey in his hand.

"I am certain, Monsieur le général. When milord was brought in, after being bled, he slept for an hour, and awoke refreshed. Louis then gave him this letter, which after reading it over and over again, with evident delight, he placed beneath his pillow. Presently, asking for pen and paper, he tried to write, but could not. This seemed to irritate him. He endeavoured to rise, but his side and sprained ankle prevented him; so he lay down, and murmured something about 'early in the morning.' Then he became composed, and falling asleep, Louis took the letter away unperceived."

"Well, but I must have his reply to her with an unbroken seal;

it must never reach her. See to this."

"Monsieur may rely upon us; we are two now."

"And require a double fee, is that it?—there, that will satisfy you. Should he write, I must have his letter on my return tomorrow. Should he be enabled to come, you can arrange with Mélanie. I must know all. See to that also."

"Mademoiselle de Rouvray is inquiring for Mademoiselle

Amélie," said the general's confidential valet, looking in.

"Go," said the general, "and remember!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE following morning Lord Vesey was so much recovered from the effects of his fall that he was enabled to leave his bed and lie on the sofa; nevertheless he found it would be totally impossible to attempt leaving the house. In this state of extreme annoyance, he began writing a reply to the letter, and the watchful eye of his valet never quitted him.

"You may go," said his master at last, though without any definite suspicion; "I hate a fellow staring at me when I am writing. How shall I send this note?" he asked himself, when at last he completed one to his satisfaction. "I know Louis is faithful, but I dare not trust others; it must be delivered safe

into her own hand."

Fortune favoured him; at that moment his friend, whom we have before seen as the bearer of "Gem" from England, called.

"You are the very fellow I want," said Vesey. "Will you be the bearer of a letter for me, and deliver it into the lady's own hand?" "Willingly, if that hand be held out towards me. To whom

is it ?"

"To la Marquise de la Valerie."

"Mademoiselle de Rouvray! Surely, Vesey, you are not mad enough to entangle yourself with a married woman. What can it lead to?"

"You are wrong," answered his friend, with energy. my soul I reverence her, for her many high qualities, being mar-

ried as she is—an accursed marriage forced upon her.

"A high-minded girl would never have consented to such a marriage, and still less would she now correspond with you."

"On my soul," cried Vesey, fervently, "you wrong her! if ever

a pure and noble creature existed, it is she.

"Ah well!" answered the other, with a shrug; "we always think so till we find them out! But give me the note; I promise you it shall only reach her hand from mine. I suppose I have only to send up my card, and ask for her?"

"Yes, George, but not till past twelve; the husband will be out

then!"

"Ah! ha! ha!" laughed the other. "But there, I wont annoy you, I'm off." And with these elevating thoughts of the lady to

whom he was commissioned, he started for Henriette's.

The general was gone to Fontainebleau, after—to lull suspicion -taking a kind leave of his wife. She sat with her mother, consoling her for her disappointment in not seeing Vesey, as she had hoped to do. The general had carefully named his accident at breakfast, watching Henriette's face as he spoke. Not all her efforts could prevent a momentary change of colour. She then, with real interest, inquired the particulars.

She had a difficult task in consoling Madame de Rouvray, and whilst she sat thus employed. Mélanie entered, said a gentleman

wished to see her below, handing a card as she spoke.

Taking the card, she whispered her mother,—"It is some one from Lord Vesev: I will return the moment he is gone." And. quitting the room, she descended to the salon.

Her visitor was more frigid than on the former occasion of his waiting upon her. Before, she had been a mere stranger, now she

was a woman he despised.

"I come," he said, after an awkward pause, "Madame la marquise, as the bearer of a letter from my friend, Lord Vesey."
"How is his lordship?" she anxiously asked; "I learnt his

accident with deep regret."

"Better," he coldly answered; "and yet unable to leave home. Under these circumstances, he requested me, as one in whom he has entire confidence, to deliver this letter, and bear any reply you might have to send. Servants are best avoided in these cases.

The "in these cases" smote Henriette to the heart: in the anxious wish to oblige and serve her mother, much had been overlooked in the act she had been guilty of.—namely, writing to Lord

"I hope and trust," she stammered, "that Lord Vesey has not

left you in ignorance of my real motive in writing?"

(She quite forgot that Vesey himself was ignorant of it. The

gentleman smiled half ironically.)

"Vesey," he replied, "entered into no particulars with me. Pray be not alarmed. I have been his schoolfellow from early boyhood: he can trust me in all things."

She felt how vain would be the attempt to make him believe in

her innocence.

"This," she mentally said, taking the letter, "will prove it to

She opened and read: it ran thus:—

"I adopt the caution you have given me an example of, in avoiding names. It would be impossible to tell you—to make you comprehend my annoyance at my unforeseen accident. I have vainly attempted to walk. And when may I see you again, as I might have done to-day? There is so much I have to say to you on that subject nearest my heart, which you know. And I so seldom see you alone. When will he be again absent? Whatever you wish to say, write it freely by the bearer. If what you wish to tell me will not brook delay, with that confidence you know you can place in my honour, come here—no one would know you. To me, the visit would bring that comfort I never fail to find when I am near you."

Even the cold phlegmatic George Manleigh was not proof against the access of some emotion, when he witnessed hers. She arose from her seat, and crushing the letter in her hand, said,

after pacing the room an instant, in disorder.--

"Tell Lord Vesey that it was not for myself I desired the interview, but for my mother. Tell him, I alone chose the moment of my husband's absence, because my mother wished, in an uninterrupted conversation, to ask him some questions about a friend of his." With every word offended pride gave fresh nobility to her face

and figure. Even Manleigh stood abashed and contrite before "Perhaps," she continued, "Mr. Manleigh, you, as a schoolfellow of Lord Vesey's, can as well answer the question, and save any further mystery in this most painful affair.

In her annoyance, she even doubted for a moment Vesey's

nobility of mind and purity of friendship.

"Madame la marquise," he answered, with genuine warmth and

feeling, "in all things command me!"

"May I ask," she said, lowering her voice to a whisper; "did you ever meet, or hear of a—a—Howard Waldron?"

"Howard Waldron?" he echoed, in the utmost surprise,

"Howard Waldron is Vesey himself!"

"Vesey!" she almost shricked, turning ghastly pale, and clinging to a chair, as her mind for a moment followed up the train of thought engendered by Manleigh's strange manner, and Vesey's almost incomprehensible letter.

"He-Howard Waldron! and if-if-Merciful Heaven! this

would be a fearful retribution!"

Mr. Manleigh thought for an instant that she was going mad. He had travelled much, knew all that books might teach, or German universities propound; but he knew not how to deal with a fainting woman. With one hand he supported her, and with the other violently rang the bell.

"Send Madame la marquise's maid," he cried, as the servant

entered.

"I am better, thank you," she whispered, sinking into a chair; "pray forgive me, and endeavour to forget it, and tell him—him—Lord Vesey," she spoke with difficulty, "that he shall hear from, or see me soon. But not to write, oh! beg him not to write!"

"I will do all you can desire," answered the really kind

Manleigh.

Before she could answer, Mélanie entered.

"Is Madame la marquise indisposed?" she exclaimed, hurrying forward; and seizing a flacon on the table, she approached her mistress, who leant back in her chair, pale and faint.

"I will take my leave," said Mr. Manleigh, making a step towards her, and uttering a few hurried words, he took his de-

parture, leaving her almost in a stupor.

"She is a nice creature," cried Manleigh, as he entered Vesey's room shortly afterwards; "and I have much wronged her. That woman is pure and innocent, is she not?"

"As an angel, I believe!"
"By George!" exclaimed the other, starting up, "what became of the letter? I wish I had secured it!"

"What letter, George? Don't you see that I am in an agony of

suspense? Pray tell me all about your interview."

"My dear fellow, I am in a maze—listen!" And he related all that passed.

"What can my name be to her or her mother?" asked Vesey, thoughtfully. "I must see her, or write."

"Pray don't, Howard. She begged you wouldn't-promising to do so herself, or see you."

The two friends talked much of the whole affair, without finding any plausible cause for Henriette's agitation. We will leave them

in this state of astonishment, and return to Henriette.

After the first shock, which a doubt in her mind occasioned her. a gentler feeling assumed its place. Vesey her brother—but how? Then she remembered something having been said by him about his father's coming into the title unexpectedly. All this must be explained—but how? She durst not write—and how see him? And yet an inward feeling told her that Vesev was her brother: she had ever from the first, as a stranger, felt such an affection towards him. But what were his feelings? He could not have deceived her—he could not have loved her otherwise than as a brother? And as these thoughts coursed through her brain, she started up, and looked around her—on the ground—everywhere.

"Does madame seek anything?" inquired Mélanie, who had

been attentively scanning her countenance.

"Yes," she replied, "a letter. There was one—where is it?"
"Oh," answered Mélanie, "I found some paper on the floor, chiffoné. I flung it into the fire; tenez;" and she went towards the "Here are some of the ashes." chimney.

Her mistress slightly glanced, and then turned away.

"You may go, Mélanie," she said, aloud; "leave me to myself. Do not mention this to any one." (She thought of her mother.)

"Oh! madame ought to know my discretion. I would not for the world." And she withdrew.

Outside the door she paused, and taking a crushed paper from her apron pocket, smoothed and placed it in her bosom, carefully.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE events of the morning had completely unnerved Henriette. and she paced the room in wild agitation, not knowing what steps to take, when the door was thrown open, and the comtesse entered in evident agitation.

"You here, madame?" was all her niece could utter; she felt that something extraordinary was impending, or had taken place.

"Yes, as you see, and ill enough I am with all this worryyour servant tells me that Paula has not been here?"

"Paula?" cried Henriette, in terror. "Paula, is she not with

you?"

"No, certainly not, or I should not be here at this untimely hour; not two o'clock yet! This comes of your horrid English customs of young ladies going out with only a servant."

"But Paula," asked Henriette, "where did she go? when, and

"How can I tell?" snappishly answered the comtesse. "I dare say she's wandering somewhere alone with Monsieur de Brissac. Think of the inconvenance of such a proceeding! Should any one meet her, what will they think of me—poor wretched me! dragged out of my room to look after girls who are actually nothing to me. An English mother, the children of a divorcée! scarcely born in wedlock! half of you born in England. I must look hideous," she cried, altering her tone, and rising to look in the glass; "all this agitation is killing me. I shall be old before my time! I knew it! I am ghastly and wan!"

And she dropped into her chair again, looking as well as ever, and with the bloom of youth, as imparted by Messrs. Chardin and

Co., on her cheeks.

"Pray tell me about Paula!" implored Henriette, scarcely

articulately.

"How can I tell you what I don't know? Send for my valet de pied—Raoul; he is below with the carriage; he can tell you

more than I: he accompanied her.'

Henriette ordered the man to be sent up, In preparation for the interview, the comtesse, with her face puckered up into a ludicrous resemblance of grief, sat arranging every finger of her well-fitting glove, and then satisfactorily surveying them, placed them on her knee, with the four corners of her embroidered hand-kerchief, perfectly arranged thereon, and held au milieu in the delicate palm; and thus she was prepared for any cause of sorrow which Raoul's history might bring to light.

The man entered; he was really concerned, and looked pale. His account, however, threw little light on Paula's disappearance.

"It is most distressing," exclaimed the comtesse, patting first one eye and then the other with the centre of her handkerchief, which, however, imbibed no moisture from the contact.

Henriette's tears were silently rolling down her cheeks.

"Pray don't cry!" said the comtesse, forgetting that she herself had been affecting to do so. "There is nothing which marks the face like tears. And you are already scarcely to be recognised. Remember, a young wife with an old husband"—she lowered her voice-"should ever be more anxious to look well in his eyes than if he were young; for he will always leave more to a woman whose beauty has pleased him to the last than to one he is indifferent about. An old man cannot expect to live as long as a young one: two young people die together-I mean, fade together; and who will be the survivor is always questionable. But, in the course of nature, the general will soon go; and though you have settlements, still much is in his power. And a man now has so many temptations and ways to perpetuate his name: missionaries here. and churches there—to say nothing of clothing the naked blacks. and buying up Chinese children at ten francs a-head, to educate and make Christians of them, as all the charitable are doing just now in Paris."

Henriette could not reply, but paced the room in agony.

"I am sure," continued her aunt, taking up the thread of her harangue, "I called upon Madame de Verneuil the other day, and found her in ecstasies over a letter she had just received, allotting her her tenth child! And what she will do with them all, if they are sent over, I cannot imagine. Ten children, with little cramped feet, no hair on their heads, only a long tail behind, noses without bridges, and long, narrow eyes! They'll be monsters!"

After a moment's silence, she added,—

"Pray don't walk up and down the room like that, Henriette: von make me quite nervous. You are like the laughing hyæna in the Jardin des Plantes!—I mean the Comte de Mornay's present. with only three legs, the other having been shot off!"

The door at this moment burst open, and Paula, pale and dis-

ordered, rushed in She flung herself wildly on her sister's neck.
"Save me!" she sobbed, with a shudder. "Save me from him,

Henriette!

"Really," said the comtesse, with an aristocratic elevation of the eyebrow, her previous nervous excitement giving place to anger. "this is most scandalous treatment! rushing about Paris alone, and in this state! you may remain now where you are; I never receive you again into my doors!"

"Pray, oh pray do not scold her!" implored her sister. child! see how she trembles," and seating her on the ottoman, she took her place beside her, hiding her pale, terrified face on her bosom.

"Perhaps you will tell us where you have been, mademoiselle?" inquired her inquisitive aunt for curiosity alone prompted the

question.

"He forced me into a carriage," said Paula, scarcely audible.
"I am not at all surprised! What man could respect a girl who walks out alone with him! Of course he will never marry vou now."

"Heaven forbid he should!" exclaimed Henriette.

"Well, settle it between yourselves! I have done with her; let her be a nine days' wonder, if she please; I will be no party

"She will remain with me," said Henriette, with decision, "my home is hers. Lie still, little sister, lie still," she whispered to the

shivering girl in her arms.

"Amélie told me how you would all treat me!" exclaimed the comtesse, rising, "and I find her words too true!" And she sailed majestically from the room.

"Tell me, darling, how it happened," said Henriette, when they were alone. "There, look up; no one is here; you are safe with

me: look up. darling.'

"He," cried Paula, shuddering, "followed me into a shop, and -purposely, I think-sent Raoul away. When he came out his manner was so unembarrassed, it quite disarmed me of all suspicion. What could I fear? He said the man would meet us in the Luxembourg, and spoke of our going to see you—we walked on. That man must be very base, sister," she whispered, with a thrill of disgust, "for he plays on our noblest feelings for his own ends. When we were halfway across the Luxembourg towards here, he suddenly stopped, and looking at his watch, said, 'Is it not rather early to call for your sister? I was going to ask you some day to do me a favour, Paula; will you do it now?'- 'What is it?' I asked. ""Why, you know, dearest,' and he looked down, mournfully; many looked coldly upon me. There is one, who has ever been a gentle friend, and too proud to accept a favour.'

"'Of whom are you speaking, Melchior?'
"'Madame Lagrange,' he replied; 'though so humble a friend,

I greatly esteem her.

"' What would you have me do?' I inquired.

"'Come with me, and see and thank her; she will esteem it as her best reward."

"'Oh, most willingly,'I rejoined, turning towards the Rue Jacob.
"'Not there, darling,' he said; 'she has moved to the Faubourg;' and he pointed to the right. He had asked me some days previously whether I had seen her lately. I replied, 'Not since I sat for my miniature.' Without the slightest suspicion I turned off towards the Faubourg. We came at last to an almost deserted neighbourhood. I stopped. Something then flashed like a fear

across me. 'Tis too far,' I said; 'I will not go to-day.'

"'We have arrived,' he replied, suddenly turning the corner of a street. I just remember a carriage standing there. A hand was on my mouth; some other men, too, hurried me forward; and in less time than I now tell it, Henriette, I was beside him, and that carriage in motion. I remember he tried to soothe me. I saw a man pass-I screamed. He, with a desperation I could not have believed him capable of, stopped my mouth. The rest I can scarcely tell you, my terror was so great. I heard a voice calling to the driver; the carriage was forcibly stopped. The door burst open, and I found myself in the arms of-of-" her voice shookof Edgar. There were loud voices: I was nearly fainting. I saw Melchior forcibly held by Edgar, after he had placed me in a fiacre, in which, apparently, he had followed us; and, speaking to the driver, it drove quickly off with me. I scarcely know how I arrived here, but I am safe. Oh, thank Heaven!" And she buried her face on her sister's bosom.

"Oh, thank Heaven you escaped!" exclaimed Henriette. "What could his intention be? He could not have purposed carrying you

away?"

"No, I think from what I collected, that he had prepared some place for my reception, thinking thus to force my father's consent." "You will never see him more, will you?" asked Henriette,

trembling for the reply.

"See him?" exclaimed Paula; "see a man base enough to heap falsehood upon falsehood for a bad purpose, and leading us astray

by our best sympathies? Oh, no! my sister."

"Oh, thank you, my own sister, for that dear assurance! Now all may be well! May all pass away, and a clear sky once more shine over us! May those who love us well and truly be rewarded; and those who would have betrayed, or wronged us, know repentance before they meet death!"

"Amen to that!" answered a deep tone.

They both started—the general stood at the door.

CHAPTER L.

OVER Henriette's face there passed an unmistakable look of satisfaction. In her desolation of heart she naturally turned to that sacred tie, where she ought to have met comfort and support. When her marriage with the general was forced upon her by circumstances, she called duty to her aid to enable her to become a good wife; but, so loving was the heart nature had endowed her with, that that feeling would have warmed into affection, had he permitted it.

Even he read her feelings aright, when she exclaimed, "I am glad you have returned, but you cannot have gone to Fontaine-bleau and back?" (As she spoke, a thought crossed her mind that she would confide all to him concerning Vesey, and get his

stronger judgment to act for her.)
"No," he answered, looking kindly, and disarmed of suspicion, in her face, as he approached. "I remembered so much to do here, that I turned back less than half way. Ah, Paula." he said. smiling, "I am glad to see you here."

"I have much to tell you about her," continued Henriette. "I am delighted you have returned. You will go to Fontainebleau

some other day, I suppose?"

His self-possession seldom deserted him, but that ominous speech caused him to start. This, then, was the cause of her being pleased at his return. She was unable to see Vesey that day, but might on another.

"Possibly I may," he uttered: a gloom, half sorrow, half indignation, crossing his countenance.

The excitement of the foregoing scenes had for a while banished the affair of Howard Waldron from Henriette's mind. Now it returned in its full force: her cheek blanched, and she looked down in painful thought.

"What are you dreaming about?" asked the general, hastily, and fixedly regarding her. "I noticed as I stood at the door, how sorrowful you looked—has anything occurred?" his former sus-

picions awoke.

"No. no," she hurriedly replied, "that is, I have something to worry me, it is true; but I cannot now tell you."

"Then you can tell me?"

"Assuredly; why not? but not now; it requires reflection."

"Then I leave you to reflection."

As he was turning away, a sudden thought possessed him that he had been harsh to Henriette. He was not certain of anything against her; returning, he stooped to kiss her forehead; she looked up and smiled. He left the room happier, and she too felt lighter at heart.

"You won her against her inclination," whispered his good genius to him, as he walked towards the library; "perhaps you have

judged her too severely; try and win her by kindness.

With the last words, he opened the study door. There sat his evil genius, Amélie.

"I knew monsieur," she said, "would excuse my waiting here for him. I heard he had returned, and having something imme-

diate to communicate, came hither."

His brow contracted. Not one word or act of that morning was left untold. Manleigh's visit, her fainting—it was supposed, at the intelligence concerning Vesey, probably imagining him worse than she had previously been led to suppose—and then the fatal crumpled letter. He read, and re-read every word-no longer could there exist a doubt. She loved, and must have avowed it, when such a letter could be addressed to her. Not a word passed his lips, except, "it is well," as he folded and placed it in his pocket-book. Amélie rose. "Monsieur has nothing more to say to me?"

"Nothing," was the reply, "you may go!"

"Should I hear anything more, I will lose no time."

"I think you will hear nothing more-go!" and as the door closed he sat down in deep and bitter thought. In a few moments he rose, and hastily writing a note, rang his bell.

"To Madame la marquise," he said, as his valet entered.

The general's note was placed in Henriette's hand. It merely said.-

"It will scarcely surprise you - my resolution to take you to-morrow morning to my estate in Brittany. I have given orders that all should be prepared for our departure. Until then I command you not to feave the house, neither shall any strangers be admitted. It is time I should place a guard over my own honour, which you seem resolved to debase. Your mother and sister can make my hôtel their home as long as they please. It were better the latter-though weak, still an innocent girl-should be removed from your influence. "DR LA VALERIE."

The letter dropped from her hand. Paula seeing her turn deadly pale, grasped her arm. "Sister, dearest sister, what has occurred?" she cried, in terror. Henriette made a violent effort, and stooping, raised the letter. "A note from the general," she replied, scarcely articulately. "It is a mistake: I must see him," and with forced calmness, she quitted the room.

He was seated by his table, leaning his head on his hand in deep and gloomy meditation. When she entered the library, he

started as from some fearful vision.

"May I ask," she said, with an unfaltering voice, "whether, when you wrote this letter you were in your sober senses, Monsieur de la Valerie?" She held it in her hand.
"Can you doubt it? or rather you might doubt my preserving

them, when I tell you I know all.

"And" she said, imagining he had discovered the relationship between Vesey and herself, which she had intended revealing to him, after an interview with that brother, "and knowing all, you blame, and not pity."

"Am I mad!" he exclaimed, rising in a wild, ungovernable rage at her coolness, "or dreaming? I might have pitied you, had you loved before our marriage, and struggled to subdue that p

sion afterwards; but when I find that not only on our weddingday was that man, that Vesey, brought into my house secretly, but that yesterday you wrote, appointing a private meeting today; when I hear that his emissary visits you, pandering to your guilty passion, by such letters as this," he held up Vesey's, which he had been again reading. "Well, then, what conclusion but one must I-can I-come to? You dare stand before me. and ask whether I preserve my senses? I warn you," and striding towards the terrified girl, he grasped her arm, "that they are shaken; and woe to you if they become desperate! May Heaven have mercy on you, then!"

"I most solemnly aver!" she protested, looking towards heaven, "that in deed, even in thought, I am innocent of wrong to you."

"And you dare perjure yourself thus?"

"I dare aver more!" she cried; and now she recovered her self-possession, "I dare glory in my motives for seeking Lord Vesey. To-day, I cannot name them—not in your present excited state; but this, I owe it to myself and others to say, that, compassed by these suspicions, until I can clear myself, I refuse to quit Paris. If I owed you a wife's obedience while you were just, I owe none to oppression; and I owe a duty to my mother, the right to protect and watch over her, as accorded by you, before our ill-fated marriage, else I had never consented."

"Then you refuse to go?"

"I do positively refuse now. What I may do when others are provided for, is different; but it is due to my honour, which is yours, not tamely to submit to degradation and infamy." She

stood proud in her uprightness.

He glanced round the room—his eye wandered over every part of it. Driven to madness by jealousy, there was murder in his What he sought, whether a thing of fancy or tangible, was not at hand. He sank, overcome, in his chair, and groaned aloud. She turned, and without another word quitted the room. As the door closed he started from his stupor, and laughed aloud. "Poor fool!" he cried. "I would have saved her.

Henriette reached her own room with difficulty, and then the too tightly strung nerves gave way to violent convulsions; and long she lay in that agonized state. The general never even sent to inquire after her, but sat alone, with a hell in his breast. Late in the evening she became more composed, though weak and

ill. Paula was all anxious affection.

She lay reclining on a couch in her dressing-room that evening, pondering how best to act, how to see and question Vesey, when the door gently opened, and her husband entered. It might be the reflection of the fire light, but to her imagination there was a ghastly pallor on his countenance, which made her almost start up in terror.

"Do not be alarmed," he said, and his voice was bland and equable, "I come in all kindness to inquire after your health."

"I thank you," she said, in a faltering tone; "I am better, much better," and she sank back.

"I rejoice to hear it: you have been very ill: I did not venture to intrude before."

"Those who come in kindness never intrude."

"Thank you, I will accept that as applied to myself. I do come in kindness." He raised his eyebrows, and a look of deep sorrow and regret passed over his face; it was gone, however, in a moment.

"Then you are better?" he again asked. "Is your medical man attentive? What is he giving you?" and he raised a phial from the table. "Madame is taking a composing draught," answered Mélanie, who had entered noiselessly. He hastily replaced the phial.

"What have you there?" he asked, pointing to a cup in her

"Some riz au lait, which madame is ordered to take; she has eaten nothing to-day."

"Nothing?"

"You seem to keep the animal fasting too," he said, pointing to Gem. who had risen from his rest at Henriette's side, at the sight of the cup.

"Down, petit," cried Mélanie, "it's for ta pauvre maîtresses. Wont madame take it now?" she inquired, humbly:-the girl felt sorry that she had been betrayed into a conspiracy against her mistress.

"No, Mélanie, presently-not now. Place it on the table

beside me. You may go, Mélanie."

The woman withdrew, after offering to light a taper.

"I prefer this light," said the invalid; "remain in the next room."

The general rose from his chair as the girl left, and stood before the fire a moment, his gaze fixed on Henriette's pale and altered face.

"I wish," she said, sitting up, "to speak a few words to you. I have much to tell you, but at present I am very weak. Still it will be a comfort to me, however painful the task.

"You would confess all?" he cried, eagerly.

"If by that you mean my guilt," she steadily replied, "no; I

assert my innocence."

"Think," he said, sternly. "You are ill—you may die. Do not add falsehood to crime You will be rightly judged ere long, perhaps. I condemn."

"I will say no more now," she said, almost inarticulately; "I

am too weak for any discussion."

There was another pause.

"Forgive me," he asked, "all you may have to forgive, as I

pardon vou."

"I have never wronged you;" and she looked up all forgiveness in his face; and laying a hand on his arm, added, "Some day you

will pity me."

"Perhaps I may, Henriette—and soon. The path of duty towards ourselves and others is often a thorny one-to take and

-" his voice trembled. "Now I will go." he added. "We shall meet again, soon; may Heaven have mercy

on us both!"

He sighed deeply as he closed the door after him. As it did so, she sank into a deep fit of abstraction, from which she was awakened by a noise beside her; it was Gem. leaping from the table. At that moment Mélanie entered.

"Did madame call?" she inquired; there was a hesitation in

her manner.

"No." answered Henriette.

Mélanie approached the table; a pleased look came over the girl's face, as she raised the empty cup. "Ah! madame has eaten her riz au lait. Pauvre madame," she added, feelingly, "she has suffered much!"

Her mistress, surprised at the tone of sympathy, looked towards the girl, and then seemed about to say something else, but changing her mind, merely observed, "I have not touched the riz au lait."

" Qui donc?" asked the other, surprised. "Possibly Gem; he was on the table."

"Mauvais chien!" cried Mélanie, seizing him, "you shall go out of the room for this;" and, taking him in her arms, she put him on the landing, and closed the door. Returning in astonishment to her mistress.

"Monsieur le général is outside," she whispered, "in a deep

reverie.

Henriette did not reply, suspecting she was playing some double game. A short time elapsed. The girl evidently wished to say something, but durst not. While she moved about the room, irresolute, the door, which had been imperfectly closed, opened silently, and Gem crept in.

"Te voilà encore!" exclaimed Mélanie, endeavouring to seize

"Leave him!" said Henriette, coldly. And the little animal, hearing her gentle voice, sprang on to the couch beside her. Her hand was buried in his curls, her mind in thought, far, far away; when suddenly the dog gave a bound, which made her start, and then another, and a prolonged moan.

"What ails the animal, madame?" cried Mélanie. "I think he

is ill."

Gem howled aloud. Henriette started up in terror. Mélanie's eyes met hers, and involuntarily both glanced at the empty cup. As they did so the dog gave another howl of suffering, and leaping from the sofa, writhed some moments in agony, and then fell dead!

Henriette uttered one loud, uncontrollable shriek of horror. At the same moment Mélanie raised the dog in her arms—the

tongue protruded, black and swollen.

"Paurre petit," she whispered, and a cold sweat of fear stood on her brow. "Poisoned! il a mangé le riz au lait!" There was a volume of suspicion in those few words. "Oh, madame!" she added, dropping on her knees in agony before the statue-like Henriette, "forgive me; Amélie urged me to betray you. knew not why; I knew not all I was guilty of.'

"Rise," whispered her mistress, with pale lips, "I forgive you. Let none know of this, as you hope for pardon! Now go, and tell the general I must see him at once."

She had gained superhuman strength for the effort.

CHAPTER LI

THE general entered the room a few minutes afterwards, fol-

lowed by Mélanie, who would then have retired.

"Stay, Mélanie," said her mistress; then, turning to where her husband stood, endeavouring vainly to attain the appearance of composure, she added, "you have made this girl a party to your suspicions of me; she must now remain and hear all I have to speak of."

He merely bowed.

"Since," she continued, "your hatred and unjust thoughts of me have made you attempt murder"—she shuddered visibly; he started aghast. "Do not deny," she cried, "before that evidence." Gem lay on the ground. "He has died in my place. You came in seeming kindness, and with gentler words than of late, and there was murder in your heart."

"Murder!" he cried, starting back. "Murder! Do you ima-

gine that I should attempt that crime—and on you?"
"Can you deny it before Heaven?"

"I can," he answered, solemnly; yet his eye quailed before hers.

"May Heaven forgive you!" she uttered.

"I again solemnly deny the crime you charge me with attempting; but if that belief will make you pause in your career of guilt, retain that belief. As to Mélanie, as you have chosen to make her a witness to this accusation, and as I do not choose that such a calumny should be spread abroad, if she will be silent, I will reward her discretion, and leave my acquittal to time. For you, Henriette, think, if you will, that you have escaped deathand repent.

"Oh, monsieur," said Mélanie, in reply to his offer of purchasing her silence, covering her face with both hands, and dropping on her knees before her mistress, but turning from the general in horror, "more gold in this affair would condemn me here and

hereafter."

"I will bribe her," cried Henriette, "by the best bribe to a repentant sinner-by pardon. Rise, Mélanie: we have all of us faults and sins to pray for. I forgive. Pray Heaven this may be remitted to vou.

The girl sobbed aloud, and clung to her hand.

"This is all very pathetic," said the general, ironically; "but I

am yet to learn why you sent for me."
"I sent for you," answered Henriette, "to beseech you to pause and consider, ere you be driven to a crime you may never be able to atone for here on earth."

"Do you mean," he asked, emphatically, "to assert that you

believe I would have murdered you?"

"I am bound to say the truth-I do-with this proof before me," and she pointed to Gem. "Can you swear you are innocent of that animal's death?"

He looked troubled.

"I could," he replied, "but I choose to leave my justification to time. If you really think it—think well how near death you were, and repent. Henriette, the lesson may save you; renounce your guilty passion, and my arms are open still to receive you. believe you have but sinned in thought.'

"Neither in thought nor act," she exclaimed with energy; "and you shall know all soon. Only swear to me, La Valerie,—swear you did not do this thing."

"When," he answered, with a strange, haggard look, "you convince me of your innocence; when you swear that all communication shall cease between Lord Vesev and yourself, then I will swear all which may tranquillize you. Adieu.

He turned, and hastily quitted the room. Henriette sat a

moment in thought.

"Come, Mélanie," she said at length, hastily rising: "come with me-no one must know it. Come with me; I must see Lord Vesey."

"Milord Vesev!" exclaimed the girl, alarmed. "Oh, madame I am only a poor servant. Forgive my fear for you. Would it not be better to wait, and take Monsieur Henri with you? Then Monsieur could say nothing."

Henriette considered a moment.

"No," she replied, "that would cause delay. I know not where he is. I will go; I must see Lord Vesey first, and then the general shall know all." And quitting the hotel with Mélanie, and entering a *fiacre*, she drove to Vesey's hotel.

Vesey was unable to quit his room. He was in a state of much anxiety from his friend's report, when his valet entered and said a lady. closely veiled, who declined giving her name, was waiting to see him. He at once suspected that it was Henriette; it is then no wonder if his face lit up, and his cheeks glowed with pleasure.

"I have been so anxious to hear from, or see you," he said, pointing to a seat near him on the sofa. "Now, pray explain all this mystery; how very good of you to come here, and see me.

He took her hand kindly, which she could not withdraw, neither could she articulate at first, but by a strong effort, she resolved to know the truth at once of the fearful suspicion in her mind, that he loved her.

"Tell me," she said, at length. "Lord Vesey, was your father

Mr. Waldron, of Waldron Hall?"

"Yes," answered he, in surprise, "but for years he has borne a title. Pray tell me why you ask?"

"I will explain presently. He was never married but once; was he?"

"Never; he married Miss Branksome-my mother, who died in giving me birth."

"Did you ever guess?" she asked, a sudden change both in her tone and manner, "any motive which could have caused the rupture of the engagement you formed in Italy last year?"

"Never!" he replied, in surprise; "why ask that now?"

"You are not without hope of removing all obstacles, are you?" "Heaven forbid I should be, for all my dearest hopes are fixed

there, though now there seems a strange cloud over them."

He was looking thoughtfully down, else he must have noticed the almost rapturous light which beamed from her eyes; all then was purity and honour, and fearlessly she might claim his affection.

"I come," she said, and tears of happiness stood in her eyes, as she fixed them kindly upon him, "to speak to you of one whom

you have mourned as dead."

"Dead!" he exclaimed; "I have never lost a friend."

"Yes, you have mourned one, Howard," she whispered, and her two soft hands were clasped over his, as the name fell gently from her lips. "You have thought a friend lost, and the best one that a child or man can be blessed with—a mother. Let me show her to you, as one more sorrowing than sinning; as one who has spent the sad hours of the long night in tears for her lost son; let me show to you your mother, Howard," her voice sank lower still-"and mine. My brother!" and she raised his hand to her bosom. clasped between her own two, as a child might press a dove fondly there.

The tears fell fast upon it, and then she raised it to her lips; and Nature's voice gushed forth in a sob of welcome, and they talked, as two such beings might, whose affections had yearned towards each other; and man though he was, the tears stood in his eyes, as she pleaded for that mother, whose voice she had heard raised in the dull, dark night, in sorrowing for her child—her forsaken

child.

They both thought it best, as their mother's error was unknown to Paula and Henri, that they should still remain in ignorance of He did not heed their love—had he not Henriette's and his poor mother's, to whom she promised him gently to break the

discovery.

"Oh, Henriette!" he cried, embracing her, one arm round her waist, "how beautiful-how divine is Nature! how she speaks to us, ever in love; from her spring all lovely things to life, and it was her breath which awoke in our hearts from the first this germ

of mysterious affection."

As he uttered these last words, the door leading into the antechamber was thrown open, with violence. Mélanie, who was scated there, awaiting her mistress, shrieked. Before a word could be spoken by either the brother or sister, the general stood before them, accompanied by two other men. Diminutive of stature as he was, the sense that he had come as an avenger, imparted dignity, almost nobility to his form. With arms elevated, and head erect, he approached the two.

Vesey's arm was still unconsciously around his sister.

"Ha! Madame la marquise!" exclaimed her husband, "so we have proved our suspicions, have we? See," he cried, turning to the others, "I offer you proof of my accusations. Ha! Madame la marquise," and he drew near her. "So you bring your menial as a witness to a false accusation of murder against me, do you?

and I, too, bring her here." Mélanie stood trembling and weeping. "And the law, too, madame, the law, to hear me proclaim you an adulteress! I charge you to arrest them both! Ah! Madame la marquise, in England they do not do things so cleverly, as your mother will inform you. You had forgotten that. But here, here, in France," and he foamed with rage, "we send such people to prison!"

"Oh! heavens!" exclaimed she, clinging involuntarily to Vesey's

arm, and restraining his indignation.

"Leave the room," he exclaimed, haughtily, waving his hand

towards the two strangers; but they did not move.
"Milord forgets he is in France," said the general, satirically, "where the aristocratic wave of his hand avails nothing in such a cause against the law. These men remain as witnesses of that woman's shame, which even now calls up no blush to her cheek. See how she clings to her paramour."

"Hold!" cried Vesey, gently releasing himself from Henriette, and grasping the general's arm. "Hold! Marquis de la Valerie; you will some day bitterly repent these words—this scene.

those men leave the room, and I will then explain."

"You have a carriage below, have you not, messieurs?" asked the general, shaking off Vesey, and turning towards the two men. Henriette again seized her brother's arm.

"Oui, Monsieur le marquis," was the reply.

"Then I charge you to take that lady, my wife, to the prefec-

ture. Her guilt you are witness to."

One of the men made a step forward; the other gazed on that fair creature, standing before her accuser—she looked so very fair

"No, on my life!" she shricked, springing forward and clinging to her husband's arm; "I am not guilty! La Yalerie, he is my

The words fell on his ear as if they were a dull, incomprehensible sound; how could that be? it was untrue—some scheme—some trick! He knew not enough of her mother's history to connect this announcement with the rest. While yet stupified by the strange intelligence, his eye fell on a paper on the table—it was a passport! A light seemed at once to break upon him-they had been on the point of eloping to England. He did not pause to think of Vesey's weakness caused by his accident, but shaking her from him he burst into a fiendish laugh.

"Not your dupe yet," he cried, "I see it all. My arrival has frustrated your schemes. You would gain time to carry out your plans. If he is your brother, let him prove it before the commis-

saire de police.

Words, prayers, or entreaties were vain—his jealousy had driven

him frantic.

Henri de Rouvray, accompanied by Edgar, had just returned to the general's hotel, to inform Henriette of their vain search for De Brissac, who had broken from Edgar's grasp and escaped, and there Mélanie, in tears, told them of the dreadful scene at

Vesey's hotel. Knowing nothing of his mother's former history.

all was a mystery to Henri.

We need not detail the examination on the morrow, which was as private as possible. Henri was there, Edgar too, and last, the terror-stricken mother and Manette. There was irrefragable proof tendered and received, before which the general's remorseful heart bowed low. Not all his prayers then could shake her determination to leave him. Even this wrong she might have pardoned. We forgive many a fault which has had love for its excuse, and love's greatest and most common fault is jealousy; but in her mind was the conviction, which nothing could remove, that he had attempted her life.

She removed to a hotel, accompanied by her mother, Paula, and

Henri, until something definitively could be arranged.

If in this world retributive justice sometimes waits on our errors. there is ever a hand of mercy to soften the punishment when we bow beneath it. Such was the reward of patient endurance, when Madame de Rouvray clasped to her bosom the boy she had mourned so long. He was not to her the handsome man to be proud of; he was not a broken link in her chain of existence reunited; no, he was far more than these, he was her first-born, the child of her sorrow, the child who had solaced so many sad hours. She had mourned him in sackcloth and ashes. He was to her the child who, for nearly twenty long years, had stretched his tiny arms to her from his cradle, crying "mother, do not forsake me. And now he had come to dry those tears, and clasp those arms. grown strong to shield her.

Two days after the examination instituted by the general, Hen-

riette and Edgar sat alone.

"It was not accident," he said, in reply to a question from her. "I had noticed for some days that Monsieur de Brissac was constantly about the Hôtel de Cressy. On more than one occasion he had evidently avoided been seen. All this excited a suspicion in my mind, and I resolved to watch. I was coming on that morning to seek Henri, and consult with him, when, turning the corner of a street, I observed De Brissac and Paula walking alone. I followed at some distance, having entered a flacre to avoid suspicion. The rest you know, or nearly so. I was scarcely prepared for the result when their carriage drove off, and had a little difficulty in overtaking them, but most fortunately I was enabled to do so, and save her from perpetual regret.
"And the wretched man?"

"He broke from me, and, entering his carriage, fled."

"But you will not seek him in a hostile manner?" she asked, anxiously. "Let him meet his punishment elsewhere; he is unworthy an upright man's notice. My greatest consolation is, that Paula now looks upon him with the contempt he merits.

She glanced into his face. It was calm, but thoughtful. "I am sure," she continued, "that Paula never really loved but you. Oh, Edgar!"-and her voice grew more earnest,-"can you not find an excuse for that being who was once so loved, and who now so bitterly regrets her error? Can you not take to the heaven of your love this star which has wandered—not fallen—from its place in the sky? I am certain she loves and regrets you!"

"Henriette!" he said, solemnly, "believe this; I am too just a man-too weak a one, perhaps, myself-to dare a harsh condemna-

tion of another. If I loved Paula, I would gladly take her to my heart, and taking, forget all but our first affections. But I do not love her, and could not without pain fulfil my first engagement; her coldness opened my eyes to my mistake, and when I cancelled our ties, it was done without regret."

There was a long and painful silence. Had Paula not been a

sister, she might have said more, but now she could not.
"My stay will be short in France," he said, at length. "Before I leave. Henriette. I should much like to see you away from this hateful city. Are you not returning home?"

"Home!" she said, and her eyes met his; "where have I one?"

The tone, the tearful expression of her face went to his heart.

"My poor girl," he fondly said, taking her hand, "you indeed merit pity." She tried to smile away his words, but her face was convulsed with the heart's effort.

"Before I go," he commenced— "Where are going, Edgar?"

"Away-perhaps for ever. I have made application to the Minister of War, to be drafted into some regiment in Algiers. I have no ties to bind me here, except those involuntary ones the heart forms too often for our sorrow. Before I go, I would, if possible, know that you are with your father, and near my uncle, who loves you so well. Will you go there, at my entreaty?"

"I wish it much, Edgar," she answered, with difficulty; "but I

dread my father,—I dread home,—I dread many things.

"Do you dread memory, Henriette-memory of the past? Oh! tell me that truly; tell me I have not read you wrongly, and that my first error has not given rise to a second more bitter." She did not reply, but her face was very pale. "I would not pain you; but let us in parting understand each other. I have thought over every word lately that you ever uttered—every act of yours in our once happy days. And on the one we walked together, Henriette -tell me; the hopes you gave utterance to, were they for another, or -

"Oh! do not in pity try my heart thus!" she cried, rising hastily. "Go, Edgar, go; it must be, and I will promise you to seek my father. He cannot reject me now in all my sorrow!" She paced the room, compressing her hands together in keen

mental suffering.

"Promise me, Henriette," and he followed and enclosed those hands in his, and his eye beamed with rapture, though the tones of the voice were sad and low-"promise me, that when I am away in my loneliness, you will, recalling the absent, feel that his bitterest sorrow,—the bitterest he can ever know,—has been the treason of his own heart, which lost him you!" She could not speak, still less, look upon him. "I go," he said, "and we may never meet; to-day I return to Lyons; from thence, as soon as

my exchange arrives, to Algiers. And when you see my poor uncle, love and comfort him: love him, who so well loves me, and in that community of love, our affections will become hallowed.

Heaven bless you. Henriette!"

Some few days after, Henri and his sisters left Paris for Tours, where Henriette and Henri were to remain. Paula preceded them, sorrowful and alone, to des Ormes. Before leaving Paris, however, they wrote, requesting permission to pay their parting visit to the comtesse. She declined seeing Henriette, on the plea of her opposing all her wishes, and now disgracing her, by the separation from the general. Of Henri she said nothing; Paula, she cordially invited, naming an hour for her visit. When she arrived, accompanied by Henri, her reception of him was chilling in the extreme, and to Paula she commenced an outpouring of her manifold miseries about Henriette.

"Oh," cried Henri, rising, "if you two are going to talk scandal,

I shall be off. Paula, I will call for you in an hour.'

"What!" exclaimed her aunt, angrily, "are my niece's moments

to be counted out to me, after all my affection?"

"Far from it, madame. I imagined you would be tired of her by that time; if, however, you desire she should remain longer, Paula dear, I'll come after dinner."

"Very well, mon neveu," replied madame, more graciously, "we

will not detain you with women's gossip."

Henri took his hat, and withdrew.

"Now," said the comtesse," drawing near her, "we can talk cosily. I hate a man by, when women have anything to say. I feel painfully convinced," she continued, eyeing Paula closely, "that there must be some secret."

"I know of none," was the reply.

"Some flirtation, some other discovery, of which Lord Vesey was only the cloak; some private meeting discovered, on which the general generously keeps silence. He is so embarrassed when speaking of the cause, declining to take my advice to force her to explain. If she must flirt, why not have done it in a different manner? have gone to balls and soirées; there she could have met this mysterious lover unobserved! Not but that I highly censure this conduct; but if it is to be done at all, why not let it be done selon bes convenances!"

"Are there convenances for flirting with a man after you are

married?" asked Paula, quietly.

"Good gracious, child, how literal you are! What I mean is this: convenances, and the world's eye, should be consulted in all things. The world is perfectly willing to shut its eyes; but if we will persist in standing between it and the sun—why, it must see, you know!"

"It it never see anything worse than it has seen with dear

Henriette, its sight will indeed be clear as noon-day!"

"There, there—let us drop the subject; I see you know nothing. And now tell me about yourself and that poor dear man, do Brissac. How much longer are you going to bouder with him?"

"Bouder with him!" she answered, in surprise; "surely you do not think my conduct the result of mere bouderie?"

"Of course I do; what else? you cannot seriously dream of breaking off your engagement?"

"This is a subject most painful to me," answered her niece, in agitation; "pray let us change it. But yet, before doing so, I must once for all say this—that I hope and trust never again to

meet Monsieur de Brissac!"

"And pray what for P He knew himself surrounded by enemies. and you, by those interested in separating you. I am certain that, though he might have carried you off, he would have respected you as a sister. It was very wrong; but once married, all would have been forgotten!"

"Oh, madame!" cried Paula, "pray say no more! I cannot listen to these arguments; they are so different to those I hear

from my kind, loving Henriette!"

"Well, we'll say no more about it now."

Shortly afterwards Amélie entered, bringing with her a handful

of wools, and a piece of tapestry.

"Is this as madame wished the colours?" she inquired, showing the work to her mistress.

The comtesse looked at it a moment.

"Dear me, no!" she replied. "These are not the proper shades. My dear niece, I wish you would go up to my boudoir, assort the proper ones, and bring them down.

She rose to obey, and as soon as her back was turned, a look passed between Amélie and the comtesse. The door closed on

Paula.

"Is Monsieur de Brissac up stairs?" whispered the comtesse. "Yes, madame, ce pauvre cher monsieur? he looks so ill and miserable."

"Shall I go and listen, madame?" asked the base intriguante.

"Oh, yes-do, pray! and let me know all you hear."

Paula went leisurely up stairs, in deep thought, the result of her recent conversation with the comtesse. She reached the boudoir, entered, and walked towards the fireplace. An unseen hand closed the door gently after her; the key turned; she sprang round in alarm, and faced de Brissac.

"Treason!" she exclaimed. "I might have expected it here:" though even as she spoke, seemingly calm, her heart heaved violently beneath the hand pressed on it to still its throbbings.

"Ay, treason!" he replied, advancing; "but it is on your own

heart, Paula, which would banish from it its life of love!"

"Yes, you say true!" she cried, with energy, "I have banished It is gone for ever!"

it. It is gone for ever:
"Do you mean to say," and he bent his eyes sternly on her, "that you do not love me?"

"I do not love you!" she spoke falteringly, knowing the misery her words would cause.

"Paula, you must be schooled in falsehood to say so," he cried. impetuously.

"No, I have been schooled by experience alone, which has

enabled me to form a correct judgment of myself; I was blinded by my own weakness, and woman's worst prompter—pride. I was dazzled by you; by the sacrifices you made for me; by your fame—your appearance, and I forgot myself and all worth and truth, to love you!"

"I do not know you," he cried, looking at her doubtingly, and clenching his hands in agony as he spoke. "You were wont to be so gentle—so loving! Are you changed, or have I dreamed?"

"Both!" she answered, gaining courage with every word.
"You—we—dreamed a dream of sin; I have awakened first. Do you awake now. There is but one path we may ever take together—repentance and atonement!"

He laughed aloud.

"What!" he cried, "would you have me turn back to the road whence I wandered, and, taking up the burden of existence, bear it for years up that track, that rugged one, called Repentance? I, who have lived for months in the sunlight of your love—renounce that day for gloom, eternal gloom and night, where I should only meet you—meet you, did I say? no! only hear you pass me by, an unattainable shadow in that darkness, which my grasp would ever be stretched to stay in its flight, and these weary eyeballs strained to see! And you would call this repentance? I should term it hell! After repentance follows Heaven. I never should inherit that; for I must ever regret, ever pine for you!"

"Hush! in mercy hush!" she said, horror-stricken! "Oh, would

we had never met! for undying remorse must be mine!"

"Not if you love me, Paula: there is life, youth—years of rapture before us!" He advanced anxiously to seize her hand.
"Back! back!" she almost shrieked, "or I shall go mad! Be

"Back! back!" she almost shrieked, "or I shall go mad! Be not deceived; I have but two feelings in my heart—horror of myself, and dread of you!"

"You must be mad to say it!" he exclaimed, falling back a step.

"Do you remember the past?"

"Well—too well!"

"Do you remember those averted, trembling looks of girlish love, which led me on?"

She was silent, but a sigh escaped her.

"I see you do. Sigh over them, girl; weep over them, woman; for they were traitors luring a man to damnation! By them I was urged to a dream of passion which overwhelmed all!—religion—faith—all! Without remorse, without self-examination (that I could not have borne), I foreswore all my sacred vows! Unshrinkingly I bore scorn, contempt, revilings! A brave man—a man who would fearlessly have dared any death—I became a coward: struck, insulted; I bowed before the shame!—and for what? for a woman's love—a woman's caprice, were better said;—and now, when her fickle heart has changed, she talks calmly of atonement! Can I renew my priestly vows, and seek comfort there? No! Can I drink at some spring, and forget? No! You, like a minister of vengeance, would be everywhere! Repent if you can: I cannot, for I love you still!"

Paula had dropped into a chair. She could not weep, she felt too sick at heart—she was frozen with horror by his words and manner. Tall ever, he was now drawn up to his utmost height: his face of marble paleness, round which the black hair clustered in heavy masses—and the eyes, those strangely dark mirrors, showing passions the most intense, were fixed with almost a maniac expression on her. He looked the spirit before he fell—but about to fall.

"Yes, love you," he said, his voice sinking to woman's tenderest tone, as when she nestles her infant to her breast, or breathes the last prayer to the dying. "Yes, love you as man never before loved, for from as high as I have fallen in loving you, so much is my passion. from its intensity, raised above the general affection

of man!"

"Melchior!" she cried, clasping her hands, "by that name, which I never thought to utter again, and by the sinful memories it awakens, I conjure you to repent, and struggle to forget. I will do all, anything you beg of me to do; I will promise all woman may perform, so you repent, and not leave on my head this weight of remorse! Oh! I have been guilty, very guilty, but it was the result of ignorance. I mistook my own heart; it was faithless, and deceived me! I never loved you, or I should not have awakened from that dream with the horror I feel."

"They tell me," he said, with an effort, "that you still love another; can it be? Has that affection lain dormant whilst my lips swore their fiercer love to your whispered hopes? Oh, it cannot be! Love's temple would have crumbled to earth at such desecration of his altar. You did love me, Paula! you do love me! I beseech you look at me, and I will read that love in your

eyes!"

"No," she murmured, raising her gaze to his face, so pale and pleading. "I again repeat, the thought of you enters into my soul with but pity, or with horror. I do not seek to excuse myself; I was a weak child; sorrow has matured that infancy to woman-

hood, and the woman shudders at the act of the child."

He sat, and leaning his head on both hands for some moments, seemed scarcely to breathe or live, save by the convulsive movements of the long white fingers, as they grasped his long and dishevelled hair. Paula strove to reach the door unheard; he started at the rustle of her dress; in an instant he was beside her, her hand grasped in his.

"Not yet," he whispered; "this may be our eternal parting.

One moment more!"

He led her back trembling.

"Tell me," he asked, as she once more dropped into her seat, and he stood before her with folded arms; "do not hesitate from false delicacy: do you love another?—him?"

"I did," she answered, "and with a girl's purest love. till I knew you. Now," and her tears so long withheld, gushed forth,

"I dare not think of him."

"You spoke to me of atonement," he said, bitterly: "shall I name yours?"

She looked anxiously on him.

"Never to meet him more; to know he lives, and loves you; to feel your soul bound up in him, as your tears tell me it is, and never to behold him more on earth. And," he sternly whispered, almost crushing her hand, in his agony, "to this I condemn you, for what you have doomed me to! And as you perform this penance, so will I live, and make atonement. Mine it shall be to bear with life, and drag on my heavy load of undying love for you in absence, in remorse. No, not that," he wildly cried; "I will not be false to my truest worship, my love for you! Were all the penalties doubled, I would bear them for the memory of the day when I dreamt you loved me."

Paula went, without power to reply.

"Yes, weep, woman—weep for yourself, for me; and, oh! for our blighted days. I charge you now, if you are not to be mine, whilst I live, never to be another's."

There was a long silence, broken only by her sobs. He sat,

with his deep gaze fixed on her.

"Paula, do you hear me?" he cried at last.

"I do," she replied.

"And do you agree, that whilst I live to struggle for consolation—how, it matters not—you will in solitude make atonement for all

the misery you have caused me?"

"I do," she answered; and, dropping her head on the table, burst into an agony of weeping. Her desolation was as that of one standing alone in a desert, the lurid sky above, and the drifting sand around.

"Now," he said, with the hollow voice of despair, "I go. Farewell, Paula; you have had little pity for me, yet I feel for you."

He walked halfway to the door; then turning round, and facing the girl, who was looking after him in terror, he said with a maniac laugh,—

"Do not forget your last vows, as you did your first; both are

sacred, though made to the apostate and accursed!"

She sprang from her chair to reach him—terror had completely maddened her. The door closed, else in her dread, her agony of what his despair might lead him to commit, she had again bound herself, body and soul, to Melchior de Brissac!

CHAPTER LII.

We are once more at Des Ormes. It is a cold, wintry night in January—the wind is whistling through the leafless trees—the large, gloomy château is closed—from no window is a stream of light thrown for an instant across the place: all is gloom and darkness.

In the library sat the Baron de Rouvray. He is bent nearly double; the hair is long, neglected, and grizzly, thrown back from the brow, and falling in masses behind the ear, showing the many lines of care in that pale, sallow, worn countenance. The hands,

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too, are thin and attenuated; and as they cast into the sickly embers letter after letter, a sigh escapes his bosom He opens one—it was Marie's—Marie's before she became a wife. He dwells over every line; and at last, reading a hopeful passage of future happiness, a tear steals down, and blisters the lying prophecy—for all

is despair.

As he sat thus in intense thought, a pile of letters before him, the noiseless door behind opened, and a trembling girl stole in—it was Paula. She durst not advance while he read, and wept; for, as he turned his head half round, she saw the tears. He could not burn that one letter; he folded it, and looked in agony at every fold as he did so. The letter had been so often read, that, like a map, each fell with a touch over the other; and then he sat awhile, thinking of the fingers which had made that white sheet a messenger of joy.

At last, with trembling hands, he placed it in his bosom.

Paula advanced a step. He took another letter from the table: it was fresh and new, unstained by time, and the characters were dark.

"Paula," he whispered, aloud, "poor little Paula."

She crept forward.

"Paula!" he exclaimed, wildly, "oh, that was my bitterest blow! My child!"

She was on her knees beside him, grasping his arm.

"Who are you?" he cried, starting from his seat, and standing

"Your child," she uttered, her eyes streaming; "your penitent child. Oh, take her to your heart once more!" She knelt, clasping her hands, as she spoke.

"Away!" he shouted, madly, "away, girl. I have no child, she for sook me—left me, cast me from her arms to fly to an apostate!

and I left her, with my malediction on them both."

"Oh, take it from me, my father!" she almost shricked, rising, and springing towards him, "for it has clung to me. But I have east him from me—my delusion is past. Oh, do then forgive me, father!"

"Or has he forsaken you?" he harshlyinquired, pushing her back.
"No, father, no. Do not think so hardly of me, as to believe I could seek you thus to deceive you; I come, in sorrowful repentance, to implore your mercy!"

He dropped in a chair, overcome by his emotions.

Paula crept towards him: she was at his side, and before her quick breathing could announce how near she was to him, she threw her arms round his neck; but the arms were powerless, and sinking before him, her head dropped on his knee, and she sobbed in which anguish. A strong clasp stole around her, gently; it raised her to his bosom, and there the father drew his penitent child to the breast, which had ached so much to hold her there!

That dark, dull room seemed to grow glad; the fire shot up into a cheerful blaze, and as Paula sat on her father's knee, with her arms clasped round his neck, and that head pillowed on her young

heart, he became another being.

A few days saw his three children again at Des Ormes; but the

bitter fruit, experience, had left its wormwood on the lips of all. Madame de Rouvray, too, had returned, urged to that step by Howard's solicitations, who had been summoned to England to his dying father, and Henriette's prayers; but she secluded herself almost entirely from all. Still, the knowledge of her presence was a joy to her husband. Some days after their return, Henri and Henriette were in the salon, when their father entered. It was the first opportunity he had found of conversing with Henriette, touching his future prospects. After a few introductory remarks. Henri said.—

It is my intention, father, to fulfil your wishes, and study with Bruton for the church. I have been doing so for some time, in

Paris, to oblige you."

"Oblige me?" cried the baron, doubtingly, "then why not

have acceded when you were here, before your departure?"

"Because," he answered, "I then thought—forgive me, father—that your hatred of me alone urged you to press it upon me; since then I have learned, and I know better."

Henriette was flushed and anxious; she turned to conceal her confusion towards Manette, who had that moment entered the room.

"Are you speaking ironically?" asked the other. "I really am at a loss to know what you mean."

"He means," said Henriette, "that your kind reception of him

-vour forbearing to urge--

"No," interrupted Henri, "it is time I should openly express my thanks to my father. I mean, sir, your generous, though anonymous, payment of those overwhelming debts, which nearly drove me to the fearful crime of suicide!"

"This," exclaimed the baron, "all this is new to me!"

"And did you not anonymously send me the cancelled bonda bond which I had given for fifteen hundred louis?"

"Never, I solemnly declare; I deemed the whole a fabrication."

Henri turned on his sister a deep and earnest gaze.

"Never mind, Henri," she cried, hastily; "it may have been

my aunt: she is eccentric, and acts strangely sometimes."

"No," answered he, after a moment's thought, "it was not my aunt, for she has been a long time estranged in affection from me. You must know, Henriette, for you foretold it to me, and it occurred."

Her cheek turned crimson beneath the earnest look of her father

and brother.

"Mon enfant," cried Manette, who had quietly entered the room. "why should you cast a shadow around yourself and your good deeds? Why have borne blame so long for what the world deemed

a mercenary marriage?"
"Good heavens!" exclaimed Henri, turning pale with astonish-

ment and horror.
"Oui, mon fils," answered Manette, interrupting his thought; "and you, Monsieur le baron, take her to your hearts, and comfort her loneliness; for with the bond which freed you"-she addressed Henri-"she bound herself, and never forgot a wife's duty and obedience till he obliged her to leave him."

Henri sank on a chair in agony, with his face hidden on the table; but other arms were round her-the victory had at last been gained over prejudice and error.

"Forgive me. Henriette, my child," cried the agitated man, "forgive me; till now I never read you aright. I have misjudged you. May Heaven bless you!"

"Oh!" she said, looking up into his eyes, "any sacrifice would ill repay this moment, for which I have yearned so many years. My dear father-"

"Henriette." whispered her brother, grasping her hand, and looking up with a gaze of blank despair, "I cannot ask forgiveness now; but you shall learn to pardon the boy, when the man fulfils what he promised that day.

She returned his earnest pressure.

"Henri," said his father, placing the trembling girl tenderly on a chair, "I have been most to blame. Against all evidence, I rejected you both; it is you from whom I ask forgiveness. In the path you are pursuing, my son, you will find happiness, for it will bring occupation, and without that there can be no real contentment. The mind feeding on itself, engenders care and repining, too often sin and sorrow—inseparable twins!"

CHAPTER LIII.

LE bon Père Andriot was again a visitor at the château, and with kindwords and gentleness endeavoured to bring comfort to all. Paula avoided every one as much as possible. There was only one person on whom she could look with composure, and that one was Bruton. Once more his place was at the baron's fireside, not for the spiritual instruction of Madame de Rouvray, who avoided every one; but for Henri, who, without becoming sad or morose, had received so severe a shock on learning why Henriette married the general, that the boy—the wilful, wayward boy—had suddenly become changed. He took pleasure in studying with Bruton, that he might fulfil his promise to his sister, the only atonement he could offer; and with that cold, stern man. Paula learnt to converse freely. With others, she always seemed in dread of an allusion to past events; with him she knew she had nothing to fear.

Madame de Rouvray was as estranged from all her family, as on the first day of her return to Des Ormes. When she met her husband, though an evident affection breathed in her manner, still there was so much suffering evinced, that he himself now rather avoided the meeting. She remained totally secluded in her own apartments, Henriette and Manette almost her only visitors. To them she spoke of Howard, of his letters, of his return to France; and those two faithful hearts dreaded the moment of that return, feeling that no power would then be able to retain her from flying to meet him. There he could not come, and Henriette felt most

keenly for all her father would be made to suffer.

CHAPTER LIV.

It was a lovely morning in early April. Paula stole out alone. to inhale the soft elastic air, which was not without its effect upon her spirits. She had pursued her walk for some time in peaceful meditation: not a soul was to be seen. A thrush was overhead. singing his matins in an elm-tree. She paused to listen; its melody struck upon the first chord of sadness in her heart. was close to that walk of elms, the favourite one of the inhabitants of the château, where we have before seen Henriette, Edgar, and herself. She thought of their last evening there together, and leaning against the tree on which the thrush still lingered, she sighed deeply. A deeper sigh echoed hers. She started and turned De Brissac was before her. She involuntarily round in terror. receded some steps.

"Do not shun me. Paula," he said, sorrowfully: "'tis I-ves, I. who have wandered here many an hour, praying for the one in which we might meet again. That hour has arrived. Did you think, or hope, that where you are I could fail to come? No, there is an impulse stronger than my own will, prompting me to be near you, uncontrollable as my affection, stubborn as my heart which

bows, but will not break.

She looked round, hoping to see some other living soul besides themselves—some one whose presence might be her protection.

"So you still dread me," he said, reading her look aright.

"Has that one act of mine-a prompting of love-made me seem so horrible a being, that you can find no gentler feeling than terror

"Why are you here?" she mildly asked. "Have I broken faith with you? Have I not kept the promise I gave? Why are you

"Why?" he returned, looking down upon her with a look of the bitterest anguish. "Why? Have you not heard that sometimes disembodied spirits wander near those they have loved, or wronged. when this world no longer holds them, either for solace or atonement? My punishment commences before the world severs its own from the spirit. Wherever you are, I must be near you. I have no rest left me. I wander-wander round the grave which vawns for, but rejects me."

He looked the truth of the words he uttered. He was ghastly. and worn to a shadow: the large dark eves were still more noticeable, from the hollowness of the cheeks. Paula was too terrified

to weep.

"Begone," she cried. "Oh! in pity, leave me. This is but prolonging my sufferings. Surely I have wept enough over my fault. Heaven may forgive!"

"Can you forgive yourself? No, Paula, I dare you to be

Happy!" she cried, looking upwards; "I am cursed; and what can remove my heavy woe?"

"Pity!" he answered; "Pity! She is a divine emanation. She will bring comfort, and hope, and rest to your heart, and lightness to your conscience, Woo her, Paula; it may not be too late to redeem the past, and save a soul!"

"Do I understand you!" she exclaimed, in horror. "Do you by pity mean that I should again bind my soul to sin—to darkness here, and to eternal night? Oh, no! I will bear all, suffer all; but never again take up my chain—no, not even if I loved you."

"Are you well and truly resolved, Paula? Think—reflect; you may be condemning one whose sin, however great, has been devoted love to you. Think! there may be burdens we cannot bear. Reflect what power you may hold in your hands—the power of life and death—worse than mere mortality. Bid me hope, hope that, even in years, you will be mine. I have faith that my fault may not be accounted a sin. I was too strong in myself—there lay my error. I, a poor, weak mortal, would fain have stood erect, as a strong oak, not to bend, not to break, only to fall, uprooted. And

I forgot the lightning, which can rive and blast!"

"I bid you hope," she said, sadly but firmly, "but not in me-hope in a more stable promise than woman's love. Be firm, and comfort will find you; repent, and peace, like a silvery cloud, will enfold you in her embrace. And we may then meet with joy—twins in happiness, as we have been partners in guilt, and its shadow, sorrow. Go, Melchior;" and her voice grew steady, though tearful in its tone, from very earnestness; "go to some other land, where my shadow may not interpose between you and Heaven, and the vows you have shaken will take deeper, truer root; the oaths you have broken will re-unite like gold in a crucible, passing through fire, to become a chain of many links around your soul. Go, and pray for me, as I will for you, and those prayers uniting, may become a bond of peace and pardon for us hoth."

"Go," he cried, "and take up my priestly robes again? I have trampled them beneath my feet. Go, and forget you—that I never can."

"Then," she said, turning to go, "I can sue no more. I repent, oh most bitterly, of the past, and I hope; do you try, for your soul's sake, to do likewise."

She moved away. A wild laugh burst on her ear, and before it had well passed into echo, another sound mingled with it—a quick, ringing shot on the soft, sweet morning air, which wafted an

erring soul's last breath from this sorrowing earth.

Paula sprang round with a wild shriek: Melchior de Brissac lay dead before her. She tried to fly, but could not. And when some time afterwards, she was found by those who anxiously sought her everywhere, she was seated on the ground, with that head whose last thought had been for her, on her knee, and with the wild and wayward gestures of an idiot, weaving her hands in the long, raven hair.

It would be a vain attempt to describe the anguish of those who discovered her; with difficulty she was removed from her ghastly burden, and then a long, heavy swoon followed. To this succeeded

fever—fever in all its horrors—its raging madness, frantic cries, and still more fearful to witness—its laughter from parched and burning lips. And thus she lay for days, a creature hovering be-

tween life and death.

In the meantime the body of the wretched De Brissac was borne into an apartment of the château, and lay there awaiting the necessary inquiries from the authorities. The only witness who could have given any testimony was bereft of sense. It was a painful task for the others to be called upon to lay bare all that sad history, but justice required it, and they were compelled to submit. Then came a still more dreadful question—his burial. With every wish, as a Christian, to perform the last offices, Père Andriot could not. The wretched suicide had placed himself out of the pale of his church. He could not lie in that quiet little churchyard. Bruton was the only person who could inter him with Christian rites, and he refused. Bruton was conscientious in his decision, but rigid in all his observances. He peremptorily refused to burv a suicide.

In the lone hour of night a dark procession wound slowly through the lovely cemetery at Tours, and there, in a corner, apart from all, was laid that erring man, who had paid so heavy a forfeit for his sin! The service was read by Henri de Rouvray, in the presence of his father and a few followers, who had attended

more out of curiosity than any feeling of commiseration.

The pale, grey light of morning looked coldly down on that grave; then rose the sun in all his beauty, and the lark sprang on high, singing his praises for that light and warmth. The flowers on the many graves, so neatly and beautifully tended, in memory of the dead, sent up their perfume as offerings from the living to the spirits whose corruption lay beneath, and in that scene of beauty one dark figure knelt on the newly-made grave, and prayed with deep and earnest fervour for the suicide—the maniac! Night had seen him there, and the hours that brought day with them. At last he rose, and with a pale, but placidly serene countenance, Père Andriot quitted the apostate's grave!

CHAPTER LV.

At last Paula rose from her bed: her face had become calm and resigned; but all joy had passed for ever. She spoke of De Brissac's fearful death without reserve. That she could do so might surprise many who know not—may they never know!—the many resources of affliction. The stricken heart must find vent, or break. There was a feeling, however, of indignation in her heart against Bruton, for his refusal to bury the wretched suicide with Christian rites. It was a feeling she endeavoured to combat; for, from the moment of her convalescence, he had been most kind most soothing in his attentions towards her. And the man she used to ridicule in her days of light-hearted gaiety, as so austere, cold, and uncharitable, she had learnt to appreciate differently.

One day he sat with Paula alone; she was just recovering, and leaning back in a large chair before the open windows; her eyes were fixed on the avenue where De Brissac had destroyed himself.

"I am glad to see you better to-day," said he, entering, and gently taking her hand. "Could you not walk a little? Shall I

offer you my arm?"

"No, I thank you," she replied, mildly but coldly; "I prefer sitting here," and her gaze was still directed towards the elm walk. Little as Bruton had studied those arts which please women, it would seem that he had a kind heart which upon some strong occasion would display itself. He saw her glance, and rising, drew down the blind, merely saying,

"The sun is powerful: it will make your head ache."

She looked up, slightly surprised; but her woman's heart divined the motive of the act.

"Thank you," she said, and one slow, cold tear stole down her cheek. He seated himself beside her, and as a father might have

done, took her hand.

"You must not indulge in these morbid fancies," he said; "they are not right, neither are they healthful for body or mind." She did not reply. "I have wished," he continued, "for many days to speak to you on a certain point, which it is repugnant to my feelings to speak of. I will, however, do so now. I have felt the change in your manner towards myself since your illness. You have harboured an unjust opinion of me."

"Was it kind to us—was it Christian, or human, to refuse the last sad rites to that unhappy man?" she asked, guessing his

allusion.

"Listen to me," he replied, "listen; not from your personal feelings, but your reason. There are things more sacred than friendship—duties above these. I may be stern and cold, but my conscience tells me that I am right. I chose the church from inclination; its duties have been my most earnest study. I do not think any one of its ordinances should be slighted or neglected. Lax ministers make lax followers. I have often found that by strictly adhering to the straight path, I have been called stern and uncharitable; but I have acted from my sense of right. If we fail to show our reprehension of a sin, that sin familiarizes itself to the mind. Suicide is a deadly sin."

"But the unfortunate man was mad!" she exclaimed, in grief.
"Prove him to have been so, and I would be the first to show all the respect pertaining to my sacred office, to the being whom the Divine Creator had pleased, for his own mysterious but wise

purpose, to afflict."

"You would pray for him?" she asked. "Père Andriot prayed over him through the long night, on the cold earth, though an

apostate from his faith.'

"And who tells you," he sternly replied, "that I did not pass that night in fervent prayer for the dead? or that in my closet I had not passed the preceding ones in supplication for guidance in the harsh duty I had to perform? Never judge the unknown, unshown acts or thoughts of others."

"Forgive me," she said, with humility.

"I know I am stern and harsh," he continued, pressing her hand kindly. But if we showed more severely our reprehension of suicide, that fearful crime would be less frequently seen. Unfortunately, too many care more for the body than the soul. Let a man know that his body, mangled by his own hand, will be cast into an unhallowed, unblest grave, and there would be thousands living and repenting to-day, who now are in their graves, pitied as 'temporarily insane, whilst their ungoverned passions drove them to the act.

"But some are mad?"

"True; but have I not told you my feeling for those? This is one of my stern duties. I may often grieve to pain others, but my conscience approves me. I will never give a suicide Christian rites."

"I thank you for all you have said," she replied, looking kindly upon him; "you have often consoled, to-day you have made a

better Christian of me.'

"And now," said he, "let us talk of your health. You require change." He stopped suddenly, and then hurriedly continued; "Why not leave here? Why not visit England?"

"I know no one there," she said, in surprise.

"I am going. Come with me. Banish this care from your heart. Your error was the fault of inexperience, and an overaffection which weakened your own good heart. I often told your father his indulgence would bring sorrow to you. Come with me: I am not young; I am not handsome; but I have a sincere affection for you. Be mine; I will make you a good, indulgent husband; and there, amid fresh scenes, you will find that best blessing, peace."

"Many!" she cried. "I marry! and he—" she pointed in

"I did not anticipate success in my solicitation to-day," answered that strange, immovable man; "but you now know my earnest wishes. Think of them; I will not tease you by importunity. Let us meet as usual; I wish to return to England, and should be happy to have you as a companion—and that companion a wife.'

She sat speechless.

"Marry, marry," thought she, "and after this dreadful event! Marry—and Edgar! But what is he now to me? What can he ever be? Did he not renounce me—cancel all? And since that hour has he ever, by word or look, been more than a brother to me? And I loved him so well-so well! My girlish heart was all his. The rest was but a dreadful dream!"

Bruton gazed on that face, working in its silent agony.

"Shall I read to you?" he asked, taking a book from his pocket. And he read-read on patiently to the sorrowing girl, not seeming to notice her, but gently persisting, until a smile rewarded his efforts.

On that day Henriette received a letter from her husband's physician, informing her that the general had met with a severe accident in a fall from his horse, and imploring her, at his earnest solicitation, to come and see him. The letter was most urgent.

Badly as that man had treated her, there was something so painful to her in the thought of death—death to any one, but especially one to whom she had so solemnly pledged herself. and so well redeemed that pledge, despite all his unkindness-that she could not but be moved when she read the letter. With streaming eves she sought her father, and holding out the letter, expressed her wish to leave at once, accompanied by Henri: and making a few hasty preparations, she departed.

All was in confusion at the general's. He had been thrown

from his horse, and brought home seriously injured.

Henriette stood by the bedside: he gazed wildly upon her, his

face distorted by mental and bodily suffering.

"I am down at last," he muttered, between his set teeth-"down, Henriette, and you will soon be a young widow-a gay young widow! Think of that!" and he grasped her hand with all the force remaining to him. She was weeping silently, and from her heart. "Don't torture me any more!" he impatiently shrieked forth, as the surgeons endeavoured to raise and examine the side. which, almost crushed in, drove the breath forth from the lungs in frightful gasps. "Itellyou I am dying; I knowit; leave me to myself."

The attendants drew back, shaking their heads at each other. One of them stepped forward again, and with a handkerchief wiped the dew from his brow, and the streak of blood issuing from the corners of his mouth. "You see," he cried, eyeing it, "you see I am dying; that is my life-blood!"

Henriette sank on her knees beside him, and held the cold hand. each moment growing more so, in hers.

"Give him water, -something to drink," she whispered to one

near her. He heard her.

"Water!" he cried, shrilly. "Pure water, mind! and see that there is no poison in it!"

He tried to laugh—she sprang up: her eve dilated with horror

at the reminiscence.

"Why do you start?" he continued. "There was poison once: you know you said it: Melanie attested it! Who gave it? Who gave it?" and passing his hand over his clammy brow: "I'm wandering," he muttered, dropping back on the pillow.

Henriette was on her knees once more, and with pale quivering lips whispered in his ear: "Will you see some one, some good, holy man? He will speak peace to you. Do, pray do, my

husband!"

"No," he cried, "I will see no one, no one but you. I want to speak to you alone!" and the terrified eyes opened wide, as a fearful pang of mortal suffering warned him of the grim messenger that would bide no delay.

One by one the persons present withdrew in solemn silence. He

raised his head with difficulty, and looked round-

"Are all gone?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered.

"Now, listen, Henriette. I have much to say, and little time to speak—put your face near mine. I cannot speak loud. I have been harsh to you. I know it. There, don't look so at me; it is

a bitter reproach for many things, but you cannot know all I felt from the first. I loved you so deeply—so madly—but of that one dreadful act of which you accused me, on my soul! in this awful moment, I was innocent, even in thought!"

"Oh! may Heaven be blest for that assurance!" she cried, raising her eyes in thankfulness. "But why allow me to think it?"

"Listen, Henriette. A foolish thing—a boyish trick—one I was afterwards ashamed of. I poisoned your dog; it was Vesey's gift. I thought you loved that man; and when you accused me of attempting your life, after the first horror, I allowed you to believe it, thinking that fear might make you renounce a guilty attachment afterwards.

There was a short silence.

"And," he continued, "now I would have my mind relieved. I watched you so keenly—we do so when we love. I felt that your affections were engaged—I suspected it long before—to another, but they said it was Vesey. And now. Tell me. You love another; do you not? I charge you, own all to me now at this my last moment."

"I do," she said.

"And he knows it? You have seen him lately?" he shrieked. "No: I most solemnly aver I know not even where he is."

"He was in Paris two months since, for I met, and told him you were coming back. That was some small triumph," he muttered to himself, "to see how he winced at the informationfor he believed it!"

"Oh! at this solemn moment," she exclaimed, rising and standing beside him, "think of something more momentous than

worldly triumph over a suffering man!"

"And leave you to become his wife—the wife of this lover of your sister—Edgar Andriot! You start! I knew I was right! his wife when this body shall be dust!" he cried, in agony. you do not know what it is to be old, a man on the verge of the grave, and have all your thoughts fixed on a young creature like yourself!—to see life fading—but a few hours to live—and the hell of knowing she loves, and may become another's! Henriette!" and he raised himself painfully, and grasped one of her hands, swear to me that you never will marry that man!—swear it!"

"No," she answered, firmly, "I cannot. It may never be; he may be gone for ever; but I cannot bind myself to the dead. Yours, I have been faithfully, under oppression and sorrow. I forgive all! freely. I now recognise only prayer and peace in my heart towards you—but the grave looses all!"

"Then," he uttered, in deep agony, "may every woe be yours and his, if you ever marry! may—"
"Hush!" she cried, solemnly; "those curses cannot light on me! Oh! reflect; they will go before, and await you at Heaven's gate!"

"You shall have wealth-all! everything I possess, only swear that to me!—only for him—only for him; for you may never love another, and if you were to, I should not know it!"

"Let us speak of other things," she said, in a subdued tone.

"The hereafter on earth should not trouble you now!"

"Think of a dving man's rejected prayer by you, Henriette." She was silent.

"Think of the agonies I endure; promise me that, and I shall

die in peace.

"I will promise you peace and pardon," she uttered, dropping

on her knees, and raising her hands, "if you will repent!"
"Repent," he cried, wildly: "whilst you are his already, in thought! Repent, and, dying like a coward, give you up? No. I will raise my last voice in denunciations against it!" Alarmed by the cry which was forced from him, the attendants rushed in, and the grim messenger passed in, too, in their wake, and laid his hand upon him.

"I leave you a beggar!" he cried: "a beggar! a --- " The voice ceased: another grasp stayed his arm: a cold hand was on

his lip: all was still.

A hand took hers, and the sheet was drawn over the distorted face. Weeks passed over, and all was still in that hotel: it had passed into other hands. On opening the will, it was found that he had spoken truly in his last hours. So far as he could, he had left her a beggar. Everything had been left her on the sole condition that she should never marry again. But still there was a marriage settlement, which was not considerable—perhaps because there had been no one to interest themselves on that occasion.

A week after the funeral, she guitted the hotel, and repaired to

apartments with Henri, until her affairs were settled.

CHAPTER LVI.

HENRIETTE'S stay in Paris was only as long as necessity required it. Her aunt was exceedingly indignant at her resolution to return to Des Ormes. Her hotel was open to her. A handsome young widow would give her éclat. But all was in vain: in the certainty of a complete rupture with the comtesse, she quitted once more for the peace and quiet of Des Ormes, where kind hearts and open arms awaited her.

One morning, shortly after her return, she walked to Père Andriot's, whom she found at home, and a smile, kind as ever, to welcome her. Still there appeared something of embarrassment in his manner; he commenced a sentence, which he as speedily terminated. The subject of her visit was, a letter she had that morning received from Howard, informing her of the death of his father, and his intended return shortly to France. Its ending was :-

"And now, my dearest sister, let me leave it to your gentle love to make our mother happy: tell her I wish it: if your prayers fail, tell her I implore it, both for her own sake and the happiness of your good, worthy father; and lastly, that by that union, I may possibly remove the barrier to my own happiness with Clara Lennox-for much cause of discomfort in that marriage will be removed."

"Armed with this, mon père," said Henriette, "you can implore

my mother, as a sacred duty now to Howard, to all of us, to unite herself to my father. Oh, that will be indeed a happy day

for me."

The bon père readily promised to see Madame de Rouvray at once, and walked home with Henriette for that purpose. She left him at the gate of the château, and turned off into the grounds to await the result. She was once again in the elm walk, and yet a coldness came over her whenever she passed the spot where De Brissac shot himself. Half an hour elapsed, and still she walked there—but not alone.

"I came," said Edgar Andriot, "to see you once more, and know my fate, Henriette. I was on the point of leaving for Algiers, when I heard of your freedom from those bonds which ought never to have bound you. I obtained a month's leave to seek you, else I should not even have seen my poor uncle: I could not have revisited this spot. And now, dear Henriette, tell me, though I mistook your heart once, I have not now, have I?"

Her hand was on his arm, and they stood still.

"I will not deceive you, Edgar," she gently and sadly said; "I did, I do love you." And then she told him all her young hopes, how she had checked them, how she had sought to forget him, in the strong resolution of a woman's heart, and how the general's injustice made her self-sacrifice a keen regret. When all this was said, she paused awhile, and continued—"Now, Edgar, it but remains for me to conclude, but in sadness. I fear Paula still loves you, and with that fear, I never can become yours. Were she married, it might be different; but know this, that the heart which has loved you through so much bitterness, and never changed, never will become another's. Go where you will, where you may, I shall ever love you."

Much he said to induce her to alter her determination. He spoke of his having first loved her, and Paula's assurance that she did not return it, making him turn towards the one, who undisguisedly avowed hers, mistaking his words, as applied to herself. He spoke, too, of his once wavering heart, till taught to know itself; and that a brother's affection was all he ever could give

Paula.

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All, however, was said in vain, and in sadness. Those two stepped out into the sunshine from beneath the elms. And another remained behind, creeping into the dark shade of her own heart, crushed and withered. Paula had heard all, and sat down on the spot where her lover fell; and if tears of bitterness might wash away blood, surely hers did. She rose, if not happier, yet resolved and resigned; and when next morning she placed her hand in Bruton's, and asked him to take her to England, he knew not that she had learnt that in this world there are many bitter sacrifices we make to ensure the happiness of others. Those are not the only emigrants in this existence who quit their native soil; too often the heart casts forth its affections on the dark waters of despair, exiles and mourners, to give up their place to stranger and uncongenial tenants, who for gold have purchased that land blighted by bitterest tears!

A year passed away; and Paula wrote from England to wish her sister joy and happiness, which she had so well deserved, and had so hardly earned. She wrote calmly; but there was no sunshine of the heart there: the paper should have mourned in mockery of

the words of iov.

The little village-church looked so gay, and the children of the village strewed the path with flowers. Père Andriot was too happy even to remember that day when his bride was to have been so escorted; for Henriette, his own loved Henriette, a blushing, happy bride, entered it with his nephew Edgar, having been previously married by a Protestant clergyman. They were accompanied by the Baron de Rouvray, and the wife who had again sealed her love to him, in ties none might dispute: and few would have known that once spirit-broken woman, in the lady so calm and serene, entering there. She knew there was pardon for error, in repentance; and in the love she now might look upon without shame, bore with patience the separation from her firstborn, whose presence would have pained the one she was bound to love—her husband. Howard had promised she should visit him ere long, and that reconciled her to his unavoidable absence from Des Ormes. Henri, too, and all were there happy, but Paula and Howard. She was in England; he in Italy, with Clara Lennox, countess of Courtown. In the background were sister Louise, Manette, and the many who loved those two-Henriette and Edgar. Poor Manette! she tried to laugh, but her tears. half sorrow, half rejoicing, were a poor imitation of either.

"I wish, mon enfant," she said, when they were again alone in Henriette's quiet chamber, "that you were not going so far from us; Algiers is quite another world. But then you have so kind a husband now."

"Yes, Manette, ma nourrice chérie; but then it is only for a year, and I must learn to be a soldier's bride, and not stand in the path of his advancement. In a year we shall, I trust, all meet here again."

"I will pray for it, ma fillette, for you have been as a child to e." The arms were round her, and the bride of an hour wept, but not in sadness—in gratitude—for almost more than a mother's love came from that humble heart. And when she departed, the bark which bore her was wafted by the blessings of father, mother -of all whom she had made so blessed by her persevering goodness through many trials.

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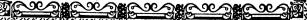
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